PARTNERS OF PROVIDENCE

CHARLES D. STEWART

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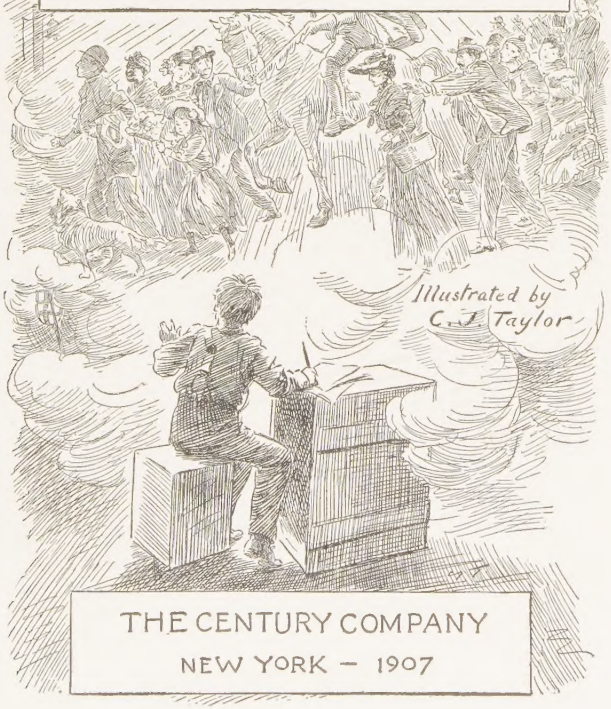
PARTNERS OF PROVIDENCE

"'He says he 'll make it a thousand'"

PARTNERS OF PROVIDENCE

BY CHARLES D. STEWART

Author of "THE FUGITIVE BLACKSMITH"



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PARTNERS OF PROVIDENCE

CHAPTER I

SAM APOLOGIZES TO THE PUBLIC, AND BEGINS

ELKINS says to me "Why don't you write a book about it?"

He claims that if I would just start in and tell the whole business and let out about all the low-down people and the way-up folks I got in with, and how it happened, nobody would believe it, and they would all say it was a great story book.

My name is Sam Daly and it is over a year now since I got into the Valdes mix-up: because I was only going on fourteen then and now I am going on fifteen. Elkins is head pilot on the Woodland: he has got a day and night license and knows the river like a book from St. Louis down to the foot of

Canal Street. That is about twelve hundred miles—it usually stays about that. He knows the number of any island from Number One down into the Hundred-and-twenties, and what Elkins says is all right. And they only numbered the ones that did n't have any names.

Well, I chewed up pretty near all of a five-cent lead pencil and did n't get anything down; and then Elkins come along and said it was all foolishness to do so much thinking about it. He told me how.

"Start her up full steam ahead," he says, "and take what comes. You was raised on a crooked river and so you have got to tell a crooked story. Nobody would expect you to go straight ahead at it, like a fellow that was raised on a canal."

Elkins meant the Mississippi, I guess—and that is pretty crooked when it tries. Half the time you 'd think you was traveling on a return-trip ticket and using it all up at once. I am with him now; but by rights I was raised on the Missouri, where it is so crooked you cross your own smoke. You can lay in your bunk and tell the name of a boat that has got miles to come around a bend—that is, if you know her pipes. But crooked or no crooked I have noticed that, however it does it, the Missouri always manages to come out just above St. Louis at the waterworks; and Clancy (which ain't no pilot at all, but I will tell you about him afterwards), he said it was a wise old river to know the way to its mouth. It is pretty uncertain and shifty and sometimes that Valdes trouble looked

the same way to me—you could n't tell HOW it was going to come out.

Elkins is kind of that way himself—which I mean that he is hard to make out—and after he has

Writing a book about it

told you to grease the rudders and find the lid to the smoke-stack you don't know any more when he IS serious. But he kept at me about the book; so I guessed he meant it. But I did n't really know whether he was giving me the wrong bell or not.

After I was at it and did n't come along, he opened it up and seen it was all blank.

"What is the matter; why don't you go ahead?" he says.

"That is all right," I says, "but I can't find the place."

"What place?" he says.

"The place to begin," I says.

You see I never knew when I was doing them things that it would ever be a story; so I just let things fool along. Why, when I first met Clancy the Tosser I did n't know he was going to be in a book.

"Go ahead," Elkins says. "If you run up against it, spar off and keep a-going. Knowing how ain't necessary when you are just sticking to facts. Spar off and keep trying till you get into the main channel; you 'll strike it easy and get to New Orleans in the end. And if anybody asks questions, tell them I signed your papers."

When he said that I seen he meant it; so here goes. But the clerk on the Speed would n't 'a' let me write a bill of lading.

One time when I was a cub on the Speed I missed the boat on accounts of staying up-town too long. I got back to the St. Louis levee just in time to see her heading for the Missouri and kicking her skirts up behind her at the rate of twelve miles an hour. That was along towards early in summer, which I remember because it was going to be Fourth of July that trip and the captain had taken on a coop of chickens at Biggs' Landing to give the niggers a feed; and besides it would make them hustle at the landings. Ours was a crap-shooting boat—

which can get niggers easier than some—and our captain done them things and knew his business. I thought of the chickens the first thing because I was hungry and did n't have any money except what I had spent; and I says to myself, "That is what you get for looking at John L. Sullivan's pants." They were hanging in a window with a sign saying, "These pants made for John L. Sullivan"; and I got so interested in them that I forgot the time to get back.

"I missed the boat"

Well, there was n't anything for me to do but work my way up on the Muscoutah, that was running opposition to us on the lower river. I thought I 'd get off at Madison City and catch the Speed on the down trip. She was sure to stop there; and that way I would n't be gone from her so long.

The captain of the Muscoutah did n't answer me for a while. He just let me stand around and then he says, "Go and see the pilot." Well, I knew how

to do that. You don't want to get too familiar with a pilot unless you 've got a license to talk. He 's a man that is used to being in a glass case, and all he wants is a pitcher of ice-water and a place to spit. He was sitting up there all alone waiting to start and reading the river news; so I did n't say nothing but took his water-pitcher and came back up the stairs with the ice clinking in it and got him a fresh box of sawdust. Then I sat down at the other end of the leather seat to see how it would maybe turn out.

He did n't say anything. I did n't say anything too; and we kept it up for a long time till we were both pretty well acquainted. Then he turned the paper over and spit and took a drink of water and said, "The hell with the insurance companies." I could see right away that he was going to take me; that showed it was all right for me to be around. So then I spit in the box and made myself at home.

That 's how I got on that boat and came to get acquainted with a man by the name of Manuel Valdes. There were only a few other passengers, and I took notice of him right away when I seen him coming up the gang-plank. He was pretty fine looking, and dark, and had a high-toned way that showed he was n't common folks—and I did n't know but he might be a down-river gambler. Some of them are pretty tony gentlemen, and as cool as a pilot. I have seen some that could let a thousand come or go without seeming to notice it. You 'd think they did n't mind it no more than scraping on a mud-bank.

Well, that afternoon I got to talking to him and I found that he had intended to take the Speed, but missed it. And when he found out that I was left by the boat, too, he sort of took up with me, saying something or nodding whenever he passed. And after a while, when the Muscoutah was laying down to a good steady gait up the Missouri—but you bet she can't ever come it over the Speed—he asked a lot of questions about my boat; and when he found I knew some people he did, he got to talking about old times and people that was away before my day.

"Come on up with me to Biggs' Landing," he says.

"What for?" I says.

"Just for company and to pass the time," he says. "I 'm going back to my place and I 'll take you up there."

"Where is your place?" I says.

"It is n't a great distance from the Landing—half a mile or so below. Do you know where the range of bluff is that is all flat rock, like a wall to the river, with the bore-hole away up on the face of it?"

Well, I should say I did. But I did n't let on what I knew about it. There 's too many bore-holes for anybody to think that you kept track of them, anyway; but I knew that one because that was where I threw the hog-chain bolt. It went all the way up and plump into the mouth of it—I knew how to swing it between my legs—and when the captain missed it he raised Cain about where it

was gone to. And the mate, that I caught seeing me, never told—and that was mighty strange till I found out some things. But I did n't say nothing about that part.

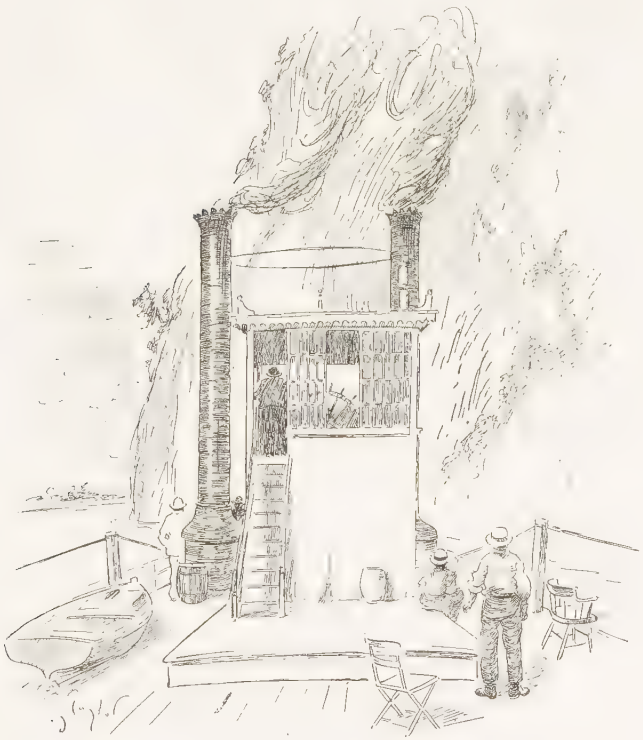
We always ran in close to the face of that bluff on the down trip, because the current works against it and scoops out the main channel there. And it is so high and flat that you can watch the smoke climbing up the wall to the scrub pine at the edge. And the bore-hole looks out over the river as round and dark as a well, and as perfect as if somebody had made it. But it is smoothed off nicer at the edges than anybody but God would take the trouble to do. All of them are, and you want to throw something into them. Well, I always wanted to let myself down and look into one of them bore-holes and see how they was made and what for; I would 'a' gone in a minute but I guessed I had better think it over.

"Yes, I 've seen it once or twice," I says. "But I ain't going up that far. I am going to get off at Madison City. And I am going to wait there because the Speed always stops there on the down-trip. And she don't often stop at that other place."

"You want to catch her soon, don't you? Well, that is one reason I asked you to come; I am going to flag her on the way down. So if you went up that far you 'd catch your boat that much sooner. You can come with me if you want to: I 'll see you on her, my boy. Think it over."

Well, I did n't care very much whether I caught

the Speed sooner or not, as far as I was concerned; but I was worrying about Rags. Rags is kind of



"You watch the smoke climbing up the wall"

deaf, so that he can't always hear when you tell him to get out of the way; and I was afraid that maybe the mate or some of the niggers would be

"Then Valdes laid back again and just watched"

kicking him around while I was away. He got deaf swimming too much with Clancy; and he is so bad that when you put him through his tricks you have to give him the commands like he was a whole regiment. He is a smart dog, though, even if the captain does say he looks like a Yak. I never seen a Yak. But when I got to thinking about him being alone, I guessed maybe I had better get back as soon as possible.

So that afternoon when Valdes came up and sat down on the big leather seat that is built along one side of the pilot-house back of the wheel, I got to studying him out. He had on a fine ring, and a gold-tipped pencil sticking out of his pocket. It seemed like I could smell paper money whenever he was around. He looked to me like he was pretty much on the square if he liked you; but I bet he would be a bad one to play crooked with. He had a steady eye like a pilot, but darker, and I made up my mind he would be pretty cool taking chances; so I liked him first-rate. I guessed I had better go; but I did n't exactly get a chance to start to talking to him again.

There was a wide spread of water ahead where you could n't tell whether it was ten feet deep or two inches, and the pilot was bringing her along cautious, studying her out ahead and ringing the bell in the engine-room. Then it would be quiet and he would feel his way wherever he seen a patch of water that frowned or smiled or showed a riffle or looked sluggish. You have to know the Missouri by the expression of her face a good deal of the

time—you can't tell how she has changed since you seen her last. You can't see your own finger in a glassful of her; and that is the way she is. So you 've got to guess on snags and sand bars. But he guessed it out all right and got across to the easy water nearer to where the channel follows the bluffs; then he put her full steam ahead and whistled a little to himself and just held her to it.

Then Valdes laid back again with his hands in his pockets and just watched the scenery. Everybody can't sit up there; they have to be important-looking passengers like him; and it 's a great place to sit and smoke and watch the scenery winding past all day on both sides. It 's all panes of glass on the sides and there is lots of room on the seat: it is sort of like a greenhouse, except that the green stuff is outside and you 're inside.

Valdes was always interested in the high rocks; anyways I noticed that whenever the bluffs would peter out on one side and start up on the other, he 'd turn his head and keep looking over that way. I made up my mind I would go along with him; but just when I was going to tell him about it he got up and gave me a look like we was acquainted and went down into the cabin again.

But I had decided to go; so I watched for a chance to tell him so. And after a while, when he came out and took a chair on the upper guards—which our old mountain boat did n't have any—I went down.

"Guess I 'll go on up to Biggs' Landing along with you," I says. "It 's important for me to get back to that boat as soon as possible."

"All right, my boy; I 'll see that you get on the Speed," he says.

Then we got to talking about things—specially about bore-holes. I never come across anybody that knew the explanation of how they got up there; so I guessed I would try him. Well, he said that Geology done it; and he knew something about that on accounts of him mining so much. But he could n't say exactly how the bore-holes got up there. I seen he did n't know neither. So I said I guessed the only way out of it was that God made them. Anyways it would look like he done it, because they are round; and he makes everything round. Look at the earth.

Well, he said he guessed that was as good an explanation as any; and from that we got to talking right along. I could n't see what a high-toned man like him was going up to that jumping-off place for—and by rights it was n't none of my lookout—; but from my asking him questions he got more friendly and interested in telling me things; and that way he let out what he was going up there for. I found out the whole business.

A good many years ago, when he was making a trip up the river to find out what there was in that part of the country, he got off and stopped a while at Madison City. And while he was there he come across a young lady which was the daughter of old Colonel Barry. He was n't looking for her; he was looking for a mine; but he decided to get married to her and settle down. So they took a big trip all over; and then he brought her back to live in her own country.

He had n't found nothing to mine; but when he looked at the rocks he seen it was a good place for grapes. He knew all about wine. You see, when there 's rock right under the soil that way it stores up the sunshine on summer days and keeps getting warmer and warmer and holds a lot of it. Then when night comes, or a long chilly spell when there is n't any sun, the rock keeps letting out its own heat and warming up the roots just about so—same as a flat-iron which you have got in bed to keep your feet warm. That is what grapes likes. You have got to keep vines good-natured that way; and afterwards the sunshine and stuff comes out good and strong in the wine. Well, Valdes was n't looking for vineyards neither; but after he come across her he seen he had such a pile of money that the best thing was to settle down; he was satisfied.

When they come back from traveling they did n't stop at Madison City; they kept right on up the river to the bluffs where Valdes had picked out a place for the vineyard. While his vines was growing up he blasted a fine big wine-cellar right down into the solid rock and put a stone house over it. It was a first-class one. That house could have stood in line with any row of stone fronts in St. Louis and looked like the head of the class; but out there it was the only house in sight and everybody around them was their help. He fixed it up like a city house inside, too; and Griswold—which was now our mate on the Speed—came to be their overseer. He bossed things around and was first mate of the vineyard.

I guess Valdes and her thought they was going to live with each other in the middle of that vine-

"Things did come along pretty good for a while"

yard right along. Things did come along pretty good for a while. They had a little girl, too; and

about the time that she was learning to play some on the piano and everything was getting to be what they looked forward to, the vines got blighted—whatever that is. They all stopped having grapes and died. So there they were living in the middle of it with everything dead around them and nothing on the vines but last year's leaves.

It was n't any fun, I bet, when that happened. You can't plant no vineyard seed in the spring and get your crops in the fall. It would have to be all started over again; and it did n't look like a very sure thing to start over again. The worst of it was that Valdes had put a lot of his money into that place and he always spent pretty free on his family. It come natural to him to be rich, and he did n't have much use for being poor. But there was the house sitting on its big wine-cellar in the rock and putting on as much style as ever and nothing to go with it.

When things got that far Valdes took what money he had left and went down the Mississippi where the big games were going; and Griswold went along. He thought the best thing to do was to take a last chance on pulling out of the hole before he was all in. He won a while and things looked like they was going to pick up and start themselves over again. Then he lost till he was broke. But a good thing about it was that Griswold won; he won two thousand of what Valdes lost after his luck changed. That was how Griswold had money to lend to Valdes on a mortgage.

But after Valdes got that money he stopped

gambling right there. He used to do it when he had plenty and it did n't make much difference; but now he seen he could n't afford to take them kind of chances; things was different from what they used to be and this was his last stake. So he guessed he would strike out again for South America. So he told his wife about it and he said he knew he could rough it down there and make money again, like he done it before. It takes money to make money and this was his last chance; and they decided that if he did n't prize off a fortune before his capital got too short they would be poor for keeps. His wife would n't 'a' let him go just on her own account; but now she had the little girl to think about. And Valdes did n't like to go and leave them, neither; but he said things would more than even themselves up when he got back. She wanted money on account of her daughter, and he wanted it for both of them; so he said good-by and went. And he said he would more than make up for it when he got back.

So here he was back again. No wonder I smelt money. He seemed to have his mind all made up to settle down with his wife and little girl again and have things fine like they intended to do in the first place. He did n't talk much to the other people on the Muscoutah; but he did n't mind me. And while he was getting nearer and nearer to the place he seemed to like to tell me about it.

"I am glad I come across you," I says. "It is important for me to get back as soon as possible; and half a day is a good deal."

"So?" he says. "Something special?"

"Yes," I says. "Accounts of my dog. I never left him alone before; and them other people don't care for him."

CHAPTER II

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF CLANCY THE TOSSER

WHEN Valdes asked me what kind of a dog he was, which I could n't tell him, except he was spaniel on the outside, but would fight—but the main thing about him is what he knows. So I explained that to him and all the tricks he could do. He got pretty interested.

"How did you come to get such a smart dog?" he says.

Well, I thinks to myself, I better tell him the whole story. When anybody tells you any of their business it don't seem polite to sit and listen and not offer to tell none of yours. "He has been telling me how he come across his wife; so I will tell him how I come across Rags," I thinks. It did n't seem no more than fair. So I done it. After I got started I seen he was interested; so I told the whole business.

The way I come across Rags was this:

One morning, when the Speed got into St. Louis, I done my chores up quick and went for a walk along the levee. Down under the approach to the

"'The way I came across Rags,' I says, 'was this'"

bridge I seen a fellow throwing red-hot rivets up into the air; and there was a fellow up above holding the tin bucket to catch them. The fellow that was doing the pitching would take one of them hot bolts in a pair of tongs and give it a swing between his legs just so; and it would go up like a skyrocket and plunk into the bucket. He could do it every time. And if he had n't done it right the rivets would a-come down into the river. So I sat down and hoped maybe he would miss the bucket. Each one would go up and seem to stop

a second at the top and then dive into the bucket like a bird into its nest. But I kept on wishing and trying to make him miss.

After a while I thinks to myself, "Maybe this is a better trade than pilot." You see I had to flunkey around a good deal on the Speed and carry out hominy and hog to the niggers at meal-times; and that ain't rightly a pilot's business. But the captain and the day pilot would tell me to go ahead and do such things and keep on waiting till I 'd get a little more sense; and then they 'd start me to learning the river for sure and nothing else. But I knew a whole lot more about the crossings than they thought I did; and I was getting already so that I held the wheel some. So you see I was pretty near started to be a pilot, and I says to myself, I 'd hate to keep on and get the river all learned and then come across something like this and find out I had made a mistake. So I sat down and watched and thought it over. It looked like a pretty good thing to do.

After a while there was some kind of a hitch in things up above; and that give the tosser time to reach quick into his pocket for a chew of tobacco and snap the sweat off of his forehead into the river and get ready for a new start. Things was delayed a little longer; so then he put his thumb into his belt with the tongs at his hip and looked around him for a change. Pretty soon he seen me and he took me in with his eye a couple of seconds.

"Do you go in?" he says.

"Pretty much," I says.

"What 's the score?" he says.

"Three to one—favor of Pittsburgh," I says.

Then he snapped off some more sweat and wiped his face with his finger.

The Catcher

"They keep it warm in this man's town," he says.

"You bet," I says.

"Well, I wish they 'd turn it off at night," he says.

"So do I," I says. "But they can't. This town is built all on limestone rock. In the day the heat shines down; and at night it shines up."

"Just what I was thinking," he says. "It 's a pretty fair town, though—all but the going in."

"These cobbled levees slope out slow to so-deep," I says. "And that ain't no good."

"It 's like wading out to be baptized," he says. "It always makes me feel solemn."

"Why don't you go off the elevator platform," I says. "It 's right down deep into catfish water."

"Good diving?" he says. "And a high place to go off of?"

"Yes," I says.

But before we could say any more there was a signal up above and he had to start right in again. And he kept them going up as regular as shooting off Roman candles. I stayed around there mostly that morning.

When noon came he threw a hot rivet back onto the furnace and pulled his coat out from under his dog and says, "Come on, Sam." Well, I was surprised to hear him call me that right off; he had n't ever heard my name. But afterwards I found out how it was. That was just the name that he called all his different friends wherever he went. No matter who he took up with in any town he would call them that and it would be like knowing the same old Sam. He said it was a good name to be called by, and he named everybody that—after Sam Patch that jumped the Passaic Falls. If his dog had n't a-got used to Rags first he would a-called him that, too—and he said that from Rags to Patch would n't be such a big change at that. Well, it would n't; except for a dog. Rags did n't

"'Good diving?' he says"

seem to be much good except to lay on his coat. And his coat was n't much use except for Rags to lay on; between times Clancy would just carry it on his arm. He did n't like much clothes.

We swam all that noon except the time that Clancy took to eat his dinner out of a newspaper which he spread out so that he could read the baseball news. He got it all read up before he was through with the meat; so while he was chewing it we sat and talked and he told me all about the catcher. The fellow that held the bucket was a nephew of the foreman's wife. He was a big lazy fellow and he was a sleeper. If Clancy happened to throw a rivet a couple of inches to the northwest once in a while that fellow could n't come to in time to catch it. Then it would go down into the river and Clancy would be blamed for it. Clancy said he had more peace in him than a cow. He said his brains was only milk that had n't come to nothing; he said just what kind of a fellow he was.

You see that fellow was n't much good for any kind of work where he would have to wake up and take notice. And I guess his folks—which was pretty rich—knew it. So the family stood him up there with a bucket in his hands; and he 'd hold it till he heard a rivet plunk in. Then he 'd reach it over and hand it to the man that takes it out and hammers a head on it. He would n't a-been no good on a nine; I bet he could n't play one-old-cat. But he got as much wages as Clancy did. Maybe three or four times a day, when Clancy did n't put them in just nice and straight for him, they would

come down; and then the boss would try to lay the blame somewhere on Clancy. And that would make Clancy mad. He said the fellow was n't a catcher at all and was n't cut out for one. He was only a nephew.

"I 've seen fellows that got their money that way before," I says.

"Sure enough," he says. "This ain't the only business where a man just stands and holds the bucket."

Right then Clancy had to stop and tend to Rags. Rags was swimming around at the bottom of the ladder to the platform, where we had forgot him; and by rights we should have pulled him up onto the platform and let him dive with us again. So now he was starting to growl and jaw to himself because we did n't do it. Clancy pulled him up and then he had to go to work. And I had to go back to the Speed.

Well, that afternoon when I had my work done I thinks to myself, "I guess I will go down and see the tosser again." And when I got down there, him and the boss was right in the middle of having it out. He talked to him as bad as if he was an umpire.

"Don't come beefing around me," Clancy says. "That fellow up there that has the bucket hanging on him is in a trance, it 's a wonder he would n't come out of it. He could n't hold a nest straight enough for a hen to lay an egg in it. Don't be trying to put a saddle on me now. Because I won't stand for none of your gaff."

But the boss kept laying it on Clancy and trying to get the best of him for talking back. Then Rags began to understand what was doing and he sat up on the coat and started to growl on Clancy's side.

"I 'm giving it to you straight," says Clancy, making a motion with his fist. "If you want that sleeper to catch for anybody you 'll have to get him a tub. And he needs a call-boy to wake him up and tell him the rivet is coming. I can put them up as straight as anybody; but I ain't no William Tell, I 'll tell you that."

The boss he talked back some more and then Clancy threw down his tongs and started to give it to him right. And the only way the boss could get the best of him was to give him his time.

"He got it all read up before he got through with the meat"

"Come on, Rags; we 're going to quit," he says. Rags jumped up and ran around and wagged his tail like he was glad of it. So then Clancy began to smile, kind of sarcastic, and whistle a tune to himself. I got up and guessed I would go away with him, but he was n't in any hurry. He took lots of time to put his coat on his arm; and he stopped to talk to me where the boss could hear it.

"I don't mind putting up with a foreman that knows his place," he says. "But this fellow takes himself serious. He is used to the kind that lives in a row of forty flesh-colored houses with pale blue steps—that 's the kind that he is used to."

"What kind is that?" I says.

"Oh, then you don't know. You are from Missouri," he says, kind of giving the boss a look. "They are imported—like sardines."

But he did n't go on and explain no more.

"What are you going to do now, Clancy?" I says. "Are you going to get a job somewheres around here?"

"Not at juggling," he says. "Skill is no good unless you have got an audience. The boss would n't let on you knew the business."

Then we started away and he told me private what he was going to do. There was a stand-pipe job at the agency, and he was going to strike for that. He was looking for most anything that took a dare —that was his line. And then I found out how he come to be working on the bridge. When he first come along they needed men to work down in the caissons. That was where they pumped the air

down in tight with you; and you had to know how to hold your breath and keep your insides just so when you was going down so that the blood would n't come out of your ears. But when you had got down under the river you did n't mind it if you did n't care. So Clancy took it. Afterwards they needed some tossing done for a while; and he found he could do it right off, on accounts of being a good baseball pitcher. He did n't have to learn that trade at all; he just found he could do it. That is how it come.

"If I don't get the stand-pipe job," he says, "I will have to strike out. But if you are going in to-night I will meet you on the platform." And then he went away.

Well, that afternoon when I had some time I went down to the bridge to see how the boss could get along without Clancy. They had another man but he was n't much good at it. And while I was sitting there, along towards the middle of the afternoon, who comes a-walking down the levee but Clancy.

He leaned up against a corner of the foundations where he was sure the boss would see him; and he watched the fellow tossing. The boss stole a look at Clancy once in a while, but kept on pretending that there was n't nothing doing and that the new fellow was all right. And after a while, when Clancy seen he had the boss real bothered, he took off his hat humble-like and went and asked if they did n't need a man. He was awful polite and humble about it. The boss looked him over surprised. He did n't know what to make of it.

"Good Lord," he says, "Don't you know when you 're fired?"

"Yes—from tossing," Clancy says. "But a fellow was telling me you wanted to hire a man for diving. I 'm pretty good at that."

"Diving! What would I want a diver for?"

"To bring up the rivets that the new guy puts into the river. I could save the firm enough to support a couple of more catchers. What you need is a left-fielder down on the bottom of the river."

Just then there was a sizz where another one come down red-hot into the water. Clancy made himself blush and look ashamed about it; he said the rivets seemed to be hissing the bum performance. Well, that got the boss good and mad. He would a-jumped Clancy, I guess, but he dassent. Clancy could do anything with himself. The boss told Clancy to get out of there mighty quick. But Clancy would n't. He said this was a free country and he come down there especial to lean up against the cool stone and take a rest for hisself. So he stood there and looked and looked till the boss could n't think of anything but him looking. I ought to a-knowed Clancy was a josher then; he could look all kinds of meanings. He did n't have to say the different things at all; he would just look them. And there ain't no law against looking. He looked awful sarcastic. And whenever there was a hiss in the river he would put his hand to his face like he had to blush. He kept that boss most crazy. And after he was satisfied he went away again.

That night me and him went to the elevator platform and had a long swim. When we were tired diving we sat on a soap box a couple of hours and did n't go in except for the wash of a steamboat. Rags would sit at the edge and whenever the waves started to wallop in the piling he would bark and all three of us would go in together. It was an awful hot night; so we sat in our wet skins and talked things over—just about how he got to be what he was and how much money he had made and how much he was going to send the next time to his mother.

It was nice to sit there cool and see the rows of lights in the long cabins of the steamboats, and them all twinkling in the water. That way we got to talking about scenery; and then I told him about bore-holes. He had n't seen none, but he had heard about them. But he could n't figure out how they got there. I seen he did n't know anything about them; I guess nobody does. So we give it up.

Clancy had n't got the job, so he was going away. He was going on a work train, which he would have to pretend he was a trackman; that way he would get almost to where he was going to. So when he was all dressed with his coat on his arm I told him I was sorry he was going, and I said I liked his style. And he said he liked my style. And then he give me his dog. But not for keeps. You see after Rags got deaf with the muddy water Clancy did n't like to take him around railroad yards much; so he did n't want him along on the

"I had a hard time holding him back"

work train. He could n't hear a switch-engine coming; and some day it would be all off with him like it was with the other dog. So when he come across me he decided he better give Rags to somebody that was reliable and could keep him traveling like he was used to. He said a steamboat would just suit a water-dog; so he let me take him. But I had a hard time holding Rags back. He howled and cried and took on terrible. He has n't got clean over it yet. Sometimes when we are going up the street Rags will make a home-run for somebody away off. And when he comes back you can see he is disappointed as if he had been struck out; he goes slower. He has got so now that he is satisfied all right and looks up to me; but sometimes I think he ain't really got through hoping that some day he will see Clancy again. Well, maybe he will; because if Clancy ever wants him back I have got to let him go. Clancy would n't really give up owning him. That is how I come to get him.

CHAPTER III

SAM STOPS TO VINDICATE THE MISSOURI; BUT GETS STARTED AGAIN

ALDES sat and listened to me with his feet up on the guard-rail; and he showed he was interested all the way through. I liked him first-rate. So now he had told me why he was in a hurry to get up the river; and I had told him why I was in a hurry to get up the river. That kind of evened things up. We did n't find no more to talk about right away; so we just sat and looked at things. Then I went up into the pilot-house; and I did n't get a chance to talk to him till next morning.

We was getting clean up into the bluffs now. If there is anything I like it is a nice day coming through the Gasconades; you can look away up at the rocks and think most anything—steeples and pieces of churches and castles and shapes of things.

Sometimes it is just a wall all along—two hundred feet high maybe, and as flat and straight-up as you could make it.

And there are more shapes than one man could ever think up. I bet if anybody was a bank robber and had maybe two thousand dollars it would be a good thing for him to go up into the bluffs. He could let himself down from the top of a place and get into a bore-hole; and I would like to see anybody catch him then.

It took an awful time to make that scenery; it is different from the other kind. I have seen the kind that just looks as if the boilers inside the earth blew up and the busted pieces come down any way it happened. But you can see this scenery did n't happen all of a sudden; it was all made by water—and it is the best kind. That other kind of scenery just makes you think what a big explosion it was, and right away you can see how it happened. But this water scenery is all work; and nobody can ever think of so much work. That is the thing about it. When you try to think of so much work you can't think of anything but time. You think back as far as you can; and then you think back another piece. It took an awful long time to do it. Then you keep on a-thinking back till it don't GO no further. And, pshaw!—that ain't a drop in the bucket. Sometimes it looks as if it was all thought up. And when you come across one of them bore-holes away up in a wall it looks like that scenery was made part by machinery. But nobody knows how it happened.

I guess that when you come right down to it the Missouri made that scenery just to show off what it can do. It is just that kind of a river when you come to know it. If it did n't do a few things like that everybody would think it did n't have a mind of its own.

Sometimes you would think so, anyways. Up in the flat land where it could go straight ahead if it wanted to, it lets itself be pushed all over; the least little thing will take it half a mile out of its way. All that 's needed is for the soil to be a little soft and mushy and give in to it and let it think it can have its way, and it can do most anything with the Missouri. You 'd think it was awful easy-going and could be led anywheres. But let something stand up and tell the Missouri it can't—let something put up a front and look as if all rivers would have to go round—and the Missouri won't do no such thing; it will cut a gap through there if it takes for eternal; it will cut a solid-rock hill clean to the heart and put fancy work all over, just for extra. Up where there 's nothing opposing it you 'd think that river did n't have no mind of its own—that easy soil can do anything it wants with it; but when the channel gets up against a hard proposition it would n't leave that place for anything. Why, that river will go clean out of its way to fight a bluff, first one side and then the other; and that is why the boat has got to keep crossing over from one range to the other all the time. Specially when you are coming down and following the channel. Lots of people is that way. Well, I

would rather tackle a hard thing myself. What is the use of trying an easy one?

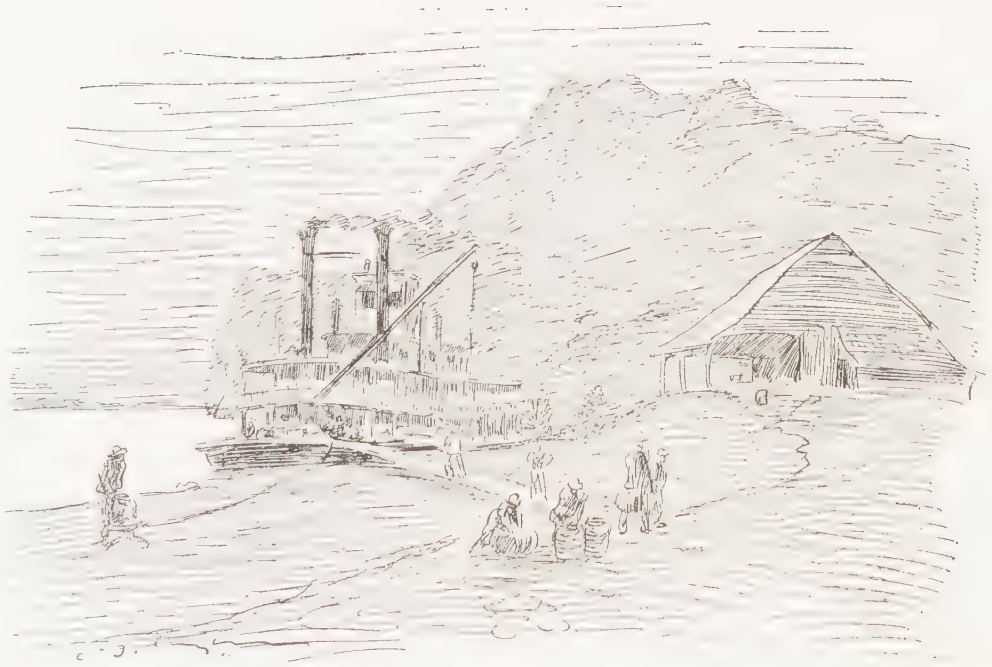
I seen Valdes was watching things and thinking them over; so I asked him if he did n't have any idea at all of how them bore-holes could a-come. Well, he said he had a sort of an idea. He said that some time a long while ago there could a-been a rock standing in the current close to the wall—just like Ninety Mile Rock is now. And the rock kept shoving the current over against the wall and whirling the water round and round with all the sand and mud in it till it bored out a deep round hole. He said the Missouri could do pretty fancy jobs that way because there was so much grit in it.

"That could be," I says. "But there AIN'T any rocks in front of them bore-holes."

"They wore away, too," he says. "They wore themselves out doing the job."

"That is all right, too," I says. "I seen a kind of a bore-hole half done that same way. But it was down at the edge of the water. And these that I am talking about are a hundred feet above your head. How about that? The river could n't a-done it without the water was up that high. And it could n't go up that high without banks; and it has n't got them that high all along—only in places. And if it ever DID go up that high without banks it would spread out all over the United States and—why, there would n't be no sense in it."

So he started in to explain that. He said probably they was made down at the water, but that the earth got to shrinking (from the water, I guess),



Biggs' Landing

and that way it kind of puckered up and left the holes up in the air. All I could make out was that he claimed they was made down below and then H'ISTED. He twisted things every way to get the job done.

Well, that was a little too much for me to swallow. When I was first on the boat and was a greeny and would run all over to get the key to the range I would a-believed that. But I ain't that kind of a softy now. I don't believe in Geology. As Stubbs says, "enough is enough, but too much is a little too much." (Stubbs is a circus clown; but I will tell you about him afterwards.) But I did n't say nothing.

After that we did n't try to talk about anything else. So I went on up in the pilot-house.

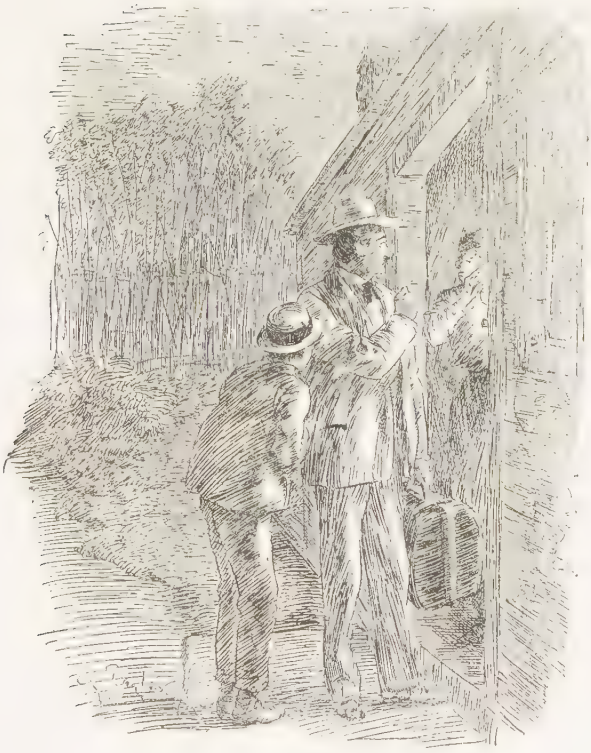
We blew for Biggs' along toward lamplight and made a slick landing—most as good as the Speed could do herself. Just one engine-bell to shut her down and then she stopped breathing and slipped along and died out against the bank—tied to a stump. No fuss at all. By that time I had come down from the pilot-house and run up forward to the stage. There was only a few barrels of salt for that place; and by the time Valdes had come with his valise the niggers had rolled them off and whirled them into place and the mate had cussed them all aboard again; and we had no more than stepped off the end of the stage when it went up and swung forward on the tackle and the wheel beat a few times and walked her off in a jiffy. And there we was.

At this place a range of bluffs had just petered out and turned into a grassy slope that faced the river like a steep front yard. But it was only the edge of the land. An old rutty wagon-road ran up from the landing-place and went out of sight over the edge where there was a dingy-looking freight-shed that was n't used much. A black and white cow—which you could see plain because she was darker and lighter than the dusk—was laying down on the slope where it must a-made her awful tired to graze all day; and there was a portable sawmill laying as if it had been shoved aside over the edge. There was n't anything else on the slope but an old cabin; you could see it was put there where somebody did n't care; and the cow was let munch around on the edge of things. The cabin had a chicken coop all made of long thin sticks like willow from a tow-head; and there was willow wove in and out to hold it together. The tall tops of the willow kept moving and swaying this way and that whenever there was a little breeze, and I bet it would puzzle any chicken to fly over that. Anyways they would n't try it, because the coop kept motioning them back.

I never thought Valdes was going up to that old place; but he went right to the door, which was standing open, and put his hand inside the dark and knocked. Some one said, "Who dah?" and scratched a match; and then a nigger girl lit a lamp and held it up to see.

"Who dah?" she says.

"Valdes," he says.



"'Who dah?' she says"

When he said that she was so took back she pretty near dropped the lamp. But she only jiggled the chimney and got it down quick on the table again; and then she stood with her hands up and the white insides of them showing in the light and looked at Valdes as if he was a ghost.

"Fo' de Lawd," she says—and she stared at him like you would think she had seen him dead and buried.

Valdes set the heavy valise inside and went in; and when she seen him walking around natural that way she let down her hands and stood with them on her hips.

"Are you—a-a-a-Lucy Jane?" he says.

"Yessah," she says. "I is her."

"Well, you have certainly grown up," he says.

"Yessah," she says.

"And where is Aunt Liddy?" he says, sitting down on the edge of a chair.

"Ma went back in de kentry wif some aigs. She jes' done gone."

"Well, I just stopped in for a minute," he says. "How is Mis' Effie and Manuelo?"

"Mis' Effie! An' Manuelo! Hain't YOU got dem?"

"Have n't been up to the house yet—I have n't seen them. I am just on my way."

She stood and stared at him again.

"I 'spec' you is gwine be mighty s'prised," she says.

"What is it? Is n't she up at the house?" he says.

"Up to de house! Deed she ain't. Dat house been em'ty five yeahs. NOBODY know whar she is."

"NOBODY!" he says. Valdes eyes widened and set themselves open. And he pushed the chair back so hard it gritted its legs on the floor. "Is n't

she down at Madison City, then—with the Colonel—or somewhere?''

''De Colonel he is dead. He dead fo' yeahs now. An' when he is dyin' he give in f'om his fool notions an' want his Effie back. But she come too late.''

''And does n't Griswold know? He knows where she is.''

''Deed he jes' de one what DON'T know.''

''How was it? How did she come to leave?''

''She jes' go. She keep on waitin' fo' you till de money is mos' gone. Den she keep scrinchin' 'long. Bimeby when she don't get no mo' letters she think maybe you is killed. So one time she take Manuelo an' jes' get off de boat at St. Louis an' go 'way. We think fo' a while maybe she is gone down to de diamon' kentry to find you. But when she been gone two yeahs we heahs dat she come back to Madison City an' jes' stay fo' to look round. An' she find you ain't come back yet. Den she say you is sho' 'nuff dead. An' de Colonel is dead. An' she cry an' go way—on de train. An' she ain't gwine come back.''

Valdes sat looking at her stiff and straight; he did n't make a move, except his fingers twitched some like the man in the waxworks when he is being wound up. He got up and sat down again in just about that way too; and he asked her the same thing three or four times like it was the only question he knew. And she just stuck to it that Mis' Effie was gone for good. And then he got up and walked over to her and come to a stop like the machinery had run down.

"How do you KNOW that she is n't coming back?"

"Kase she ain't got nobody. An' she tell Rastus so. He see her when she was back to Madison City; an' he ast her ain't she gwine up to de Landin' to see Aunt Liddy. An' she say she would like to, kase Ma has been her mammy f'om de first. But she say dey is reasons why she don't want to go on dat steamboat. An' she say you is dead an' she don't want to see de house nor de vineyard nor nuffin' no mo'. She go 'way agin. Nobody know whar."

Valdes started to walking up and down; you could see he was feeling bad. And when the girl seen what she had started up she would n't go no farther. She just stuck to it that Mis' Effie was gone for keeps.

There was an iron bird screwed onto the corner of the table, and it was holding a long piece of calico in its bill. I knew already how it worked because when I squeezed its tail it opened its bill and dropped the piece of calico on the floor. Then when I put the calico back in its bill and let go of its tail it would hold it again. It worked fine.

Valdes seen that and come to a stop.

"You have her sewing bird," he says.

"Yessah. We lets it hold de sewin'. Ma say she rathah jes' pin de sewin' to her knee—dat is her way. But she let de bird sit befo' her an' do it; kase she say it is Mis' Effie's bird."

Valdes unscrewed it from the table and turned it over in his hand every which way; and then he

just stood looking at it. He held it in his hand and looked at it like it was a dead bird.

He screwed it back on the table again; and then he turned and went slow over to the door and stood looking out into the night with his back to us. The sky was clear and all lit up with stars. Sometimes I could see his shoulder rise and fall like he was taking a long deep breath.

All of a sudden he turned and took down a tin lantern with a candle in it that was hanging by the door. He did n't light it, but just stood for a spell thinking; and then he picked up the valise. When I seen him taking that up I knew he was going away. So I got up and went along.

I took a-hold of the valise and offered to carry it some; but he said I better just carry the lantern. So I said that suited me all right because the lantern would be lighter; and right away it made me think of Clancy because that was a joke. But he never said nothing.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEAD VINEYARD

E went along the slope and then down where the old empty log cabin is in the hollow at the bank of the river and then up where the bluffs begin to rise; and we kept on till we were away on top of the flat country that goes back from the edge of the wall of rock. We walked along past the shrubby pine that grew up there; and sometimes we came so close to the edge that you could see down. And if you leaned over you could look straight down the face of it at the river below. And you could see the river shining away in the distance and the woods away across; it was a fine night. The air was all full of moonlight. The water down there and the woods on the other side were all touched up with it; and it was so bright that you could make out your shadow on the ground.

When we came to a bend we made a cut-off through a piece of dark woods; and after a while

we came right out to the edge of it again. Down in the current I seen a sawyer. The old black trunk of a tree had got a-hold with its roots on bottom and its business end pointing up-stream—some of them do that way—and I could see it wagging up and down on the current and working its jaw like it was hungry for a steamboat. It was fixed just right to spear a hole and rip out the bottom when she was coming swift on the down trip; and I says to myself, "That old sawyer knows its business; I guess it has tried it before." And after a while we came to where we saw the dead vineyard spread out all dark and tangled in the moonlight.

It was nothing but black bare vines, twisted and crooked and bent; and some clinging to poles that were half falling over with them; and some on the ground, like snakes; and all of them mixed up with their own shadows till it looked twice as tangled and dismal as it was. And right in the middle of it was a gray stone house looking out with its windows as dark as caves. The house looked like it had stopped being good for anything but to hold itself full of darkness and look so that the place would be more solemn and lonesome.

I sort of hung back at first; and Valdes went ahead and led the way through the aisles of the vineyard. After we were going along right in it, that way, it seemed to be moving itself—the vines all changing shapes as you passed, and twisting and twining like they were trying to get the best of each other. All them bent crooked shapes and knotty twisted arms and staggering poles would

keep mixing up with each other when you moved ahead; and then they would all stop and look deader than anything when you stood still. And when I would start up again it seemed to me as if all of them were bending and struggling this way and that and sliding their shapes into one another like snakes a-rassling; it made me feel squirmy myself. But I guess it was partly on accounts of me having Valdes' troubles in my head; and so I could see the worst kind of things all over. I kept my eyes about me. When you looked at the drunken poles holding up the dead vines you could n't help thinking how they used to be all green and growing and covered with big leaves and bunches of grapes; and it made a person feel queer —anyways it did me. It was just the skeleton of a vineyard. And the way it was all black and bent made it look like it died hard.

We wound in and out till we were most to the middle; and then Valdes stopped and looked around him. So I stopped—and the whole business stopped. I had been thinking it was nothing but lonesomeness in that place; the house looked full of it and the place did n't care for anything. It seemed that there was n't a thing to listen to except the dry sounds we made brushing against the vines. And after we come to a dead stop it seemed like I could 'most stand there and listen to the scenery. Sometimes it would be just a dead twig falling to the ground and making you wonder what had picked it—and sometimes it would be a bird stirring in the vines—and sometimes a cricket

The Dead Vineyard

that jumped and bumped his head on a dry leaf, I guess—the more I listened the more I could hear. It ain't ever quiet anywheres, I guess—even when folks is away. There is always something changing around and getting ready if you only knew it. Sometimes a little breeze would come that you could hardly feel; but you could hear it rustly all over. And between times the other things would keep a-doing.

It was a fine night—outside of that place—and I thinks to myself it would be just the kind of a night to be coming down-river on the engine-house, or maybe laying up at a landing, watching the niggers trot back and forth in the torch-light. I wished it was me that was doing it. It was n't much fun in this place, and I wished I had n't come. Even the moonlight on the ground did n't seem to like it; it looked troubled. But that was all foolishness; and I guessed I had better quit stopping and starting and fooling with the looks of it; I would go ahead as if it was n't nothing. And just then Valdes drew his hand across his forehead and started up again; so I came on close behind. Then everything set itself a-going and started to do it over again.

When we got to the house, Valdes struck a match on the stone steps and held it inside his hand (I could see the blood in his fingers); and when he got it to going good he lit the lantern and opened the door. I heard a screech that made me jump and start back; but it was only the rusty hinges. There was something about things that made me

feel that way. And after we went inside it was the same; wherever we walked the house seemed to creak and complain.

Valdes would stop in the middle of every room and hold the lantern high up and then turn and look all around. All the doors were open or unlocked; and he looked into every corner and into the closets. In the kitchen and pantry he looked into the drawers but he did n't find anything except an old brassy spoon. Then he lifted a door in the floor and there came up a different kind of air, cool and sweet. I would a-knowed right away what kind of a cellar it was. Its breath smelled of wine.

He went on ahead and lit the way down the steps; but they did n't squeak any because they were cut right in the solid rock. There was n't any more of them little sounds down there. That place was TOO quiet. There was n't any mortaring or joining together or any kind of building about that place; it was a room on the inside of a big stone. He stopped in the middle of the cellar and circled the lantern around the same; and then I saw barrels, big and little, all along the sides. Then he picked up a wooden mallet and went all along and thumped each one on its head; and they gave out all kinds of hollow sounds—each one seemed to be telling in a different voice that it was empty. And there was n't anything else there but some big timbers with dark stains on them, and a wooden screw that showed they were pieces of a wine-press. I started to ask something about them;

but it sounded like I was talking into all the barrels —I could n't hear anything but my own voice in my ears. It was too quiet a place to talk in; so I shut up. Anyways I never met my own voice all alone like that before.

When he had thumped all the barrels he held the lantern up and looked around at the place again; and then he gave the valise a shove with his foot over towards the pieces of wine-press and sat down on them with the lantern beside him. So I sat down too and wished he would make up his mind to go.

He took a long, deep breath and let it out; and then he took another. I thought at first he was taking a good, big smell of the wine-cellar. So I took a sniff myself, for it smelled so good you could pretty near taste the wine that had been there years ago. And next time he just filled his lungs plum' full and blowed it out. It seemed he could n't get his breath down where he wanted it to touch bottom. Then he beat that all hollow, and took it in so long and deep and let out so much that he sort of scared me. And when I was going to say something, he heaved another the likes that I never heard before—it was worse than any yawning.

"What is the matter?" I says. "Is anything the matter?" But he only shook his head, which I could n't tell whether it was No or being sorry, and done it again. It seemed like he could n't stop it.

Well, that Valdes took in his breath as slow and deep as the Speed—and she has about the deepest pipes of any boat I ever heard. Her old cylinders

are long like gas-pipes, and she throws up the exhaust so steady that you would think she was going to blow all the steam out of the boilers at a breath. But blamed if I ever heard a man breathe and sigh like that before. I commenced to think that maybe something was going to happen to him; and he got me to feeling so bad that my heart went way down. So I asked him agin if something was ailing him; and he did n't say. But after a while he shook his head a few times and drew his lips tight and got the best of it; and then he breathed shorter, down in his stomach.

All of a sudden he opened the valise and began scrabbling around in it. And that was when I started to hold my breath. Besides his things there was bunches of money in packages—stubby dollar bills of a kind that I had n't seen before, and money with the eagle on it.

He rummaged around through his neckties and collars and money, pushing it to one side and then the other—and when some of it fell back and got in his way he jammed it all together out of his road like it was n't worth a cent. There was a shammy-skin bag that had something in it, too; and he poked that around out of his way. At last he come to a package with some note-books and white papers; and right away he stopped and went through that. What he wanted was a photograph; and when he come across it, he dropped the white package back with the rest and shoved it all down so the valise would go shut. And then he sat looking at the picture.

I hunched over and took a look at it, too. And right away I says to myself, "That 's her." I just guessed it. She was pretty good looking and was smiling at him right out of the picture. There was

"He sat looking at the picture"

a little girl's face close beside hers; and the little girl looked some like Valdes—specially her dark hair. When he looked at them a while it come over him to breathe hard again; and when he started doing that I edged away some.

Looking at him in the lantern-light, that way, I could see he was n't as strong as you would take him to be at first. You could see that he used to be pretty strong, and he was dark complected, which looked some like tan; but when you come right down to it you could see that he did n't have all his strength left. But you would n't a-noticed it when he was all slicked up and carrying himself cool like a gambler. He was kind of hollow under the eyes; and when you looked at him deep you could see he had been through more than he could ever do over again. I made up my mind he was just feeling bad and would get done; so I sat and waited.

He kind of moaned once in a while; and when he found his voice that way he started to say things. He got to blaming himself for one thing and blaming himself for another; and he took on about what a blind fool he was not to appreciate what he had; and how he had done wrong to his family; and how the money had cost him more than it was worth. He just sat and complained because he did n't have nothing but money.

Once he kind of excused himself for being down sick and away off where he could n't help it; but then he started over again to run himself down for going away in the first place. And he blamed himself like everything for staying away after he was well and did n't hear from her, but just let himself get away off again and go as good as crazy because the money was coming his way. I bet I could a-bought that money from him for ten cents.

Well, it was pretty monotonous sitting there underground in that stony place and hearing nothing but his voice sounding in it. It was hollow and mournful down there and I got to thinking of everybody that was dead and buried. I wished I had let well enough alone, and not come along—except it was worth it to look at the money.

All I come for in the first place was on accounts of getting up nearer to the bore-hole. Some day I wanted to look inside of one and see how deep in it went and what Nature done it for. I thought I would look down over the edge of the bluff and see if it felt too dangerous to go down on a rope like Clancy said he could.

And while I was thinking of that, it popped into my head what else Clancy said.

"Say," I says.

"What is it?" Valdes says.

"Say," I says. "I knew a fellow that knew of a woman that lived in a vineyard—I just come to think of it. It was up here in the bluffs somewheres. And it all died off. And it was up over a bore-hole."

"WHO?" he says, all of a sudden. "Where is she?"

"I don't know," I says.

"Where WAS she?—what city?"

"I don't know," I says.

"Where did she TELL it to him? What town did HE come from—the fellow that told you?"

"Why, I don't know them things," I says.

"Tell me," he says, "where the man IS"—standing up so excited that I jumped up too.

"I don't know where he is," I says. "He was the fellow I was telling you about—Clancy. And he was going away somewheres else. But he ain't there now. Because he goes all over."

Then he started in and fired a lot of questions at me, with his hand a-hold of my coat at the shoulder. And he got to shaking me as if I was a money-bank and he could shake what he wanted out of my mouth.

"Look a' here," I says: "There ain't no use in trying to get it out of me that way. A fellow can't remember anything except what he used to KNOW."

He ought to a-knowed that without me telling him. That kind of brought him to a stop. But he stood looking at my head as if he thought there was something in it. And he was going to get it out.

He went down into the valise and took out a piece of gold money.

"Here 's a guinea for you," he says.

"What for?" I says.

"For telling me all you can remember," he says.

He seemed to think he could get anything with money.

It was a queer kind of foreign money: but I guess it was good. It was heavy. And when he seen me looking it over that way he skinned off a couple of five dollar bills. "Maybe you would prefer this," he says.

"For just talking? Maybe it won't be worth it—for just talking," I says.

"That makes no difference. Tell me what you know," he says.

"All right," I says; "here 's your guinea back; I 'll take the eagle money every time. I 'll tell you how it was."

And then I started in and told him the same as I already did on the Muscoutah. And blame if he did n't want to hear every word of it over again. It was just the same, except I put in about the woman—which was all I had forgot, except some little stuff. And then I seen what he thought. Just because I had left that out he could n't trust me on remembering at all. He kept asking me; and then I up and told him plain I did n't KNOW where she was. He looked at my head suspicious again.

"Why did n't you ASK the fellow where she was?" he says—and then he began looking at me mighty stern.

"What did I care about the woman?" I says. "I did n't know she was anybody. I was n't interested in HER. I was talking about bore-holes. Clancy said he would n't be afraid to let himself down from any place; and he did n't know anything about them. But he said a lady that was talking about rock-scenery spoke about bore-holes; and she said there was one near her vineyard that died up here. That 's all I know. And it 's a wonder I ever remembered that part at all; it 's most a year ago and it just now popped into my mind

when I was thinking deep. And I thinks to myself, 'maybe it is the same place.' "

"It IS," he says.

He did n't say anything for a little while; and he seemed to be satisfied. Anyways he did n't want his money back. He forgot about feeling bad and took out a piece of paper and the gold-tipped pencil and went right to work asking questions—about what Clancy looked like, and such.

But he had n't got far when we seen the lantern would n't hold out much longer; the candle was burned down to its socket and the flame trying to let go. And before we got to the stairs it went out and let the place be pitch black; it was the darkest I ever seen. He did n't have a match; but he knew the place anyway; so I had to take hold of his coat-tail—which I had to try all over him to find—and just went out by feeling. I would n't want to be blind.

CHAPTER V

AUNT LIDDY HAS HER SAY

KEPT a good hold of Valdes' coat-tail till we got up-stairs and through the house; and then we came out to moonlight and night seemed like day. So then I let go. I followed him through that vineyard again and along the high bluff and down into the lonesome hollow without saying a word. And I was mighty glad to see the lamplight shining out of the cabin again.

When we were coming up to the door Aunt Liddy was sitting sewing at the piece of calico, but did n't seem to be doing much; and while I was watching she let it drop in her lap and started to take on and mourn. "Mah po' Effie, Oh, mah po' Effie!" she says; and she kept on complaining like that—trying to sew at the same time.

When Valdes came in she got up and said how surprised she was at what Lucy Jane had told her; but she was n't half as glad to see him as you would a-thought. And then they both wanted to do the

questioning and not the answering. Aunt Liddy told him just the same as Lucy Jane had done. And all there was to his story was that he had got back. Aunt Liddy came to a stop as if she did n't know what to think about it; and then she sat down again and made out she was terrible busy.

You see, she thought Valdes was killed and that was why he could n't write; or else he was living yet and Mis' Effie had found him somewhere and was getting along all right. I began to see that all she cared for was her Effie—which she was her black mammy—and not for him hisself; and now when she saw that he had been living all the time she stored it up against him. I could see she was pretty disappointed in him that he was n't dead. She was a little mammy with a thin face and a nose that was pretty straight; and she could look like white folks when they have their opinions.

But after a while their questions and answers began to fit together and explain things to each other. I did n't exactly get head and tail of it, but I began to see how it was. Valdes had been gone eight or nine years. At first he wrote letters; and he let her know of some place where he could come to get answers. But after a while things took him away off where it was wild and uncivilized; and then he got sick and pretty near died and could n't get back to the place where letters come for a long time. And then it was a long time between mails and he could n't always wait there for

answers; and then he would be a long time getting back there again. But when he was on his feet again he wrote and waited a while; but he had to go away again. He did n't hear from her again; and he did n't have much opinion of the mails down there anyways. All that he could n't help; it was a mix-up. But now he blamed himself mighty hard for one thing. A couple of years ago, when he began to think he had been away long enough and ought to come back, he made one more try and struck it rich. It had come at last—what he had pretty near killed himself for already—and he went as good as crazy about it, thinking how he would get back at last and have everything fixed up like he promised. And that was how he kept a-going. He wrote again a while before he was coming back. And here he was.

Things began to explain themselves more and more. And then when Aunt Liddy found about the way it was and the kind of fevers he had, she began to pay more attention to him.

"Did you git much, down in de gol' an' diamon' kentry, Mistah Valdes?"

"Yes, I did pretty fair, Aunt Liddy—pretty fair. You might say I am rich."

And when she started to think about that, it just turned Mis' Effie's bad luck into worse. Aunt Liddy did n't think of anybody but her. And when she had took on about it some more, she put on her big round silver specs and came over by the fireplace and stood looking at Valdes straight through the middle of them.

"Lawdy!" she says, "you looks de same as ever. Jes' as scrumptious an' high-toned as ever."

"But what I want to know is just how she came to go," he says.

"Well, she scrinch along an' keep waitin' till she could n't scrinch along no mo'. To'ds de las' she give in dat maybe you is killed. Den she go 'way. But she did n't tell me she gwine— 'kase she know I would n't LET her. Dat gal say all de time dat things is gwine turn out good in de en'. An' I say I seen things what DON'T turn out good. But she keep sweet an' cheerful an' go on a-hopin' all de time. Dat gal makin' things to give me all de time she ain't got half enough to eat! Deedy, you could n't MAKE her po'—she jes' would n't BE it. She 'bout like you. An' she tell Manuelo 'bout de fine dresses she gwine have when her P'a come back. She make de finest picture-frame fo' me outen de red leaves an' de pine cone an' de dead grape-vine. She laugh an' say dead vineya'ds is good fo' dat anyways. An' one time she cut her finger mighty bad makin' de toy house fo' my li'l Ephra'm. I tie it up fo' her an' she keep on. 'Kase she all wrap up in pleasin' dat chile. Jes' de same as if he was a white boy. An' was n't Ephra'm jes' proud of dat toy house! It was all made outen pastebo'd, wid doahs an' windows. An' de ya'd had a fence round it wid moss fo' de grass. An' she take some lace paper outen her ol' candy boxes an' make sho' 'nuf curtains in de windows. An' she put glue on de sides an' sprinkle it wid salt till it jes' twinkle—an' dey was a red chimbly on de top.

An' what beat Ephra'm was de roof on dat house. She covah dat roof wid watahmelon seeds. An' dey was put on lak real shingles."

Valdes sat by the fireplace and listened. But Aunt Liddy got away off the track and he had to put her on it again.

"But how did she come to go?" he says. "Tell me just how that was."

"When she don't heah from you no mo', she says you gwine be back in fo' y'ars. Come fo' y'ars an' she is come to her last cent; so I holp her scrabble 'long. I go back to steamboatin', like in de old days. I take my kitchen on the Speed an' cook de same as I used to. Long as I was on de boat she could take a trip to St. Louis an' live in my pantry. 'Kase dat was my pantry an' she was my COMP'NY. An' mostly she would have something from the house all wrap up in a piece of paper fo' to sell at St. Louis. She would n't sell no mo' 'n one piece at a time; 'kase she don't know how soon you is comin' back. Dat'a'way I feed mah Effie up good fo' a week at a time. An' den when she git off heah at de place agin I make her take some things what I cook up fo' her an' li'l Manuelo. She always say she don't want 'em. But I make her take 'em. I tell her dey is a PRESENT—den she jes' can't holp takin' 'em. Dat way she manage to piece out. An' come a trip or two I 'vite her fo' comp'ny an' take her agin. An' dat all right an' nache'l; 'kase ain't I her Mammy what brung her up f'om de first? But whenebber we lands at Madison City, Effie go an' hide in de co'ner of my

pantry, whar nobody kin see her. 'Kase why? 'Kase de Colonel was gittin' old an' notiony an' tell his business to folks. When you lose yo' money an' go 'way, he say it jes' what Effie mought expec'. An' he is boun' dat she come back to him wifout invitin'—same as she left. An' he expec' dat gal gwine do it. But she woan' stan' to heah no talk 'bout you. She mighty proud. He never give in till he is mos' dyin'—an' den she come. But she is too late. Bimeby, when dey is done foolin' at de co't-house, she git de few hund'ed dollahs what he left. Den she take anothah trip in mah pantry; an' at St. Louis she kiss me good-by, sayin' she gwine to take Manuelo up-town. I 'spec' she gwine git Manuelo a new dress, 'kase dat gal sproutin' right up outen her clothes when she is fo'teen. Dat how she go. An' she did n' tell me—she know I would n' LET her. An' jes' befo' de boat lef' dey come a fine new dress fo' me—all done in sto' paper. De boy what bring it make me ma'k in a book; an' he hurry off jes' when ingine-bell ring. But deedy! I knows whar dat dress come from."

"And she was back again in two years?" Valdes says.

"Jes' lookin' fo' you. Den she give up. An' she go away."

"And where do YOU think she is?" Valdes says.

"Maybe down in dat Souf' America. An' maybe off in some city whar she kain't move from. De Lawd know."

Valdes sat pulling his black moustache and look-

"'She kiss me good-bye'"

ing in the fire. Aunt Liddy tried to make herself believe she was sewing. But she dropped it again.

"Lawdy, she git so ha'd up dat she scrape all de yallah paint off 'n a ham cloth fo' to git de muslin. An' she fix it all up an' make Manuelo a li'l underwaist. But she don't git down in de mouf or mind it. Dat gal would n't BE po'—even when she hain't got no money. Yo' kain't MAKE dat gal po'. She 'bout like you."

All the time she was saying that I seen Valdes could hardly stay down on his chair. All of a sudden he got up and walked back and forth with one side of his moustache in his mouth and him chewing it like he did n't give a cent for himself. I bet you he thought it was just about what he had coming to him. Then he spit it out all straggly and began pulling the other side out of shape.

"And how about Griswold?" he says. "Did n't he ever let her take any more of that money? Did n't he keep an eye on her—as he said he would?"

"When de five y'ars is up an' she say you is dead, he git off 'n de boat an' come up often. He say, sometimes, maybe he jes' have to close down on de mo'gage—'kase he need de money bad. But he offer to let her take some—jes' private. Den he come agin an' say maybe he won't have to shet down de mo'gage. An' he offer to let her take some if she need it. But she won't take none. Dat way he pester her to'ds de last. She say she hope he go 'way an' STAY 'way."

"I guess Griswold had bad luck," says Valdes.

"I don't know nuffin' 'bout dat," Aunt Liddy says. Then she sewed hard on the calico and made out she was busy.

"When will the Speed get here on the down trip?" he says to me.

"It depends on how far up she goes," I says. "Most of her load was farm machinery and salt, and I guess she won't go very far up. She ought to be back in a couple of days, if she don't get stuck or have bad luck."

"I hope she does n't have bad luck," he says. "I must see Griswold. He will know where she is."

When he said that Aunt Liddy dropped the calico in her lap and looked at him over the top of her specs.

"Now look a'heah, Manuel Valdes, I jes' don't like to see you foolin' yose'f dat 'a' way—jes' 'kase he was yo' overseer. I say he keep an' eye on her. Deedy yes—he oversee her. He keep BOFE eyes on her." And that time she sewed busier than ever. "I tells you he DON'T know," she says.

"What is it you are not telling me?" he says, standing up.

She dropped the calico and brushed it clean out of her lap and left it hanging in the bird's bill; then she straightened up stiff.

"Well, I 'spec' it about time you know—'kase it all over now. Dat man love her long befo' YOU did."

Valdes he stood with his mouth open and one hand up like a pump that is gone dry.

"And what—else?" he says.

"Hain't I been her Mammy f'om de first?" she says. "Did n't I take his letter up to de convent? An' did n't she laugh an' tell me bouten it? She only smile an' show it to me—'kase den she only care fo' you. An' now she HATE him. But dat why he come to be overseer. Dat why he work on de place. Dat why he 'courage you to go down de Mississippi, an' take de mo'gage; an' 'courage you to go 'way; an' say he will keep an' eye on de place an' see her through till you gits de fo'tune. Dat why EVER'THING. An' when it come out dat he still like her she won't TAKE de money."

When Aunt Liddy got that far she began to sway and holler like she had got religion. "Dat why EVER'THING. An' I say he PISON de vines. DAT what I say. 'Kase mah 'Rastus, what went out to de Blackin' Hills, he say yo' kin squirt stuff into a tree an' kill it jes' like a pusson. An' I say, he PISON de vines."

Valdes' eyes set themselves open again and he began to come to—kind of dry at first—and then you ought to 'a' heard him cussing under his breath. He walked up and down the floor with it hissing out of him; he done it like a leaky cylinder that you know there is lots more steam inside than what comes out. And then something slowed him up and brought him to a stop.

"Effie never told ME. She never said he wanted her first— And me having him for overseer!"

"Lawdy—a woman ain't gwine hate a man, an' do him hahm, jes' 'kase he used to like her. She ain't gwine have him lose his job jes' fo' DAT.

"'He pison the vines'"

She married now—an' dat all in de past. Dat what she think. She never 'spise him till he ac' dat 'a' way an' want her AG'IN."

Valdes started up and down and cussed all over the place again. It was n't any windy steamboat cussing, neither. On a steamboat you have got to talk loud and blow around to keep the niggers a-going—but this was n't loud; it was real inside cussing. He whispered things that had edges on them.

I wished I had n't come.

When Aunt Liddy saw what she had started up she kind of toned down. She went on about how Mis' Effie never did care for Griswold and how she always believed in Valdes to the last. That only made him worse for a while; but afterwards it shut him off a little.

"How do you know that he poisoned the vines?" he says.

"I don't jes' know it. But when it is all over, an' Effie gone, I say to mahse'f, 'hocum things go flip-flop like dat?' An' 'Rastus he say how yo' kin do wif trees. Den it come to me like a visiun f'om de Lawd. Dat how I know. I jes' FINK so—'kase I feels bad 'bout mah Effie. But she trus'es you all de time an' say things gwine come out good in de en'. But I say I seen things what don't come out good in de en'. An' she tell Manuelo how nice it gwine be when her Pa come back an' bring her ever'thing. She jes' keep on hopin' along. 'Kase she got Manuelo to hope FOR."

Valdes kept on slowing down; and then he went

and stood in the door and looked out at the stars a while. And then he went out of the door and was gone somewheres. But I did n't go along; I kept sitting by the fireplace where I was.

I just sat there and wished I had come in time to get some supper; and while I was watching the kettle in the fireplace a common old yellow cat came in and sat down next to me. When I looked at her she stretched her mouth and went through the motions of saying "meow"; but she did n't say it. I watched her and pretty soon she said "meow" as plain as day again; but that time she did n't come to any sound either. You could see her do it—opening her mouth to say "me" and stretching it back at the corners for "ow"—and then sitting as contented as if she had done it; but she had n't. It looked like she was just sitting there telling it secret to me. Well, I never seen a cat that tried to keep quiet before; and when she done it again I turned around and told Lucy Jane that the cat was trying to say "meow" and could n't; and maybe she had better come and tend to it. It looked unnatural and out of place, and I did n't like it. Lucy Jane said it was n't nothing, though it was kind of aggravating. The cat could n't help it, because one time she lost her voice. And she had to meow anyways.

"Ain't she got ANY voice?" I says.

"Dat cat los' her voice," Aunt Liddy says. "She los' it de time I drown her. An' one time, when she been dead so long I mos' fo'git about her, she come back at lamplight an' stan' in de do' an' make

faces at me. Jes' like dat. I could n't b'lieve it—afteh me puttin' her in de flouah-sack wif a stone an' seein' her go down de ribber an' away off. I put on my specs an' it look like I was losin' mah hearin'; an' den I say 'Hem' to mahse'f—jes' to see if I could hear it. But dat cat did n't drown at all. She went down an' got out someways in de water; an' she los' her voice. I nebber was so s'prised in mah life. Not till DIS BERRY NIGHT."

So I sat and watched for her to do it some more. That kind of interested me, because I never seen a cat that kept quiet before—specially at night. After a while I got sleepy and they told me to go to bed. There was a calico curtain stretched across one end of the room and it was an extra bedroom; so I went in there. The bed was just boards built against the wall with a husk tick. But it was all right when you laid still.

"Well," I thinks to myself, "the old nigger mammy is right. I always did think there was something more to Griswold than just driving niggers on a steamboat. He did n't have to holler as much as most mates; and they knew enough to move along quick when he said it, too. And then I got to worrying about Rags again. Suppose anything happened to him while I was away? What would Clancy think of that? He would think I was a GREAT one, he would."

There was an open place in the curtain where the pieces did n't draw together; and after a while, when I was laying there looking out, Valdes come to the kitchen door.

"She always trusted me—did n't she, Aunt Liddy?"

"Lawdy, ain't dat jes' what I 'se TELLIN' yo'? She say you has done de bes' yo' kin."

Then he went away again. He come and asked it and went right away like a messenger boy that has got the answer. After that I began to forget things and went sound asleep.

CHAPTER VI

A SOUND IN THE DISTANCE—WHAT CAME OF IT

IN the morning when I came from behind the curtain, Valdes was sitting at the corner of the fireplace. It looked like he had been sitting there all night. Aunt Liddy was busy getting breakfast and Lucy Jane was out on the slope milking the cow. Nobody said nothing, except Aunt Liddy sometimes talked to herself; and once she told herself how Mis' Effie just trusted Valdes and never did care much for Griswold. When she said that I seen a hard smile come over his mouth; but the rest of his face was as stern as ever. That smile was kind of unnatural—like the voiceless cat when she meowed.

That cat came and sit right beside me at breakfast and looked up and made faces for something to eat. She interested me a lot.

"Has n't she got ANY voice at all, Aunt Liddy?" I says.

"She hain't got none at all," she says.

"Gee!" I says. "I would rather have a dog that is a little deaf than a cat that meows when she can't."

But nobody said nothing.

"It would be a good thing to raise kittens from that cat," I says.

But nobody answered that, neither. So I give it up.

After breakfast me and Valdes went out and sat on the green slope. I just lazed around and watched the black and white cow h'isting herself up to the different mouthfuls on the steep place; and then I looked up at the blue sky and happened to think it was the Fourth of July—and they was having just the right weather for that chicken dinner on the Speed.

"How long do you think it might take the Speed to get back this far?" Valdes says.

"Two or three days," I says. And then he just sat and watched the river going by as if that water was time and he was seeing it pass. And I says to myself, "When the Speed makes this landing on the down trip there is going to be something doing."

Nothing went past for a while but the trunk of an old cottonwood tree. Then there come a piece of something that looked like a pig-pen, making five or six miles an hour. Then there come a boat that I did n't know loaded down with buffalo bones. It was the first I had seen that year and I looked at her as long as she was in sight, because bones was getting scarce up the Missouri and I guessed she

"No Blackfeet Indians could shoot through that boat"

had been away up to Montana to get them. But she was n't a regular old Missouri boat like the Speed; she was just one of the fancy-looking packets, all cabined over as high as her splash-board, with a texas on top of that and the pilot-house up on top of that, all skimming along on the water. She was n't a Fort Benton boat at all, by rights; and I bet she WOULD N'T 'a' gone up there a few years back when there was Indians.

The Speed was n't built like that. In the first

place the Speed had a low one-story cabin and a hull pretty much like an extra-long canal-boat. There was n't any texas atop of the cabin, either; and so the wheel-house stood up like a tower all by itself with long stairs going up to it. And the cabin was n't near as wide as the hull, either; and that left the deck like a sidewalk all along each side; and them was the hogways. You bet, when the hogways was all piled up with cordwood around the cabin, no Blackfeet Indians could shoot through that boat.

The cabin did n't go clear to the stern, either. Only the engine-room roof was back there and that was so low that the splash-board stood up in front of the wheel like a back-yard fence—but higher. Them kind could go right up to Fort Benton and do business—before they went and built railroads. But pshaw! that was ten years ago; and now most of the buffalos was killed and the Indians shot off and there was n't anything to do but haul down bones. A good thing never does last long. We did n't go up there at all no more; and it sort of made me disgusted to see that fancy boat come down from where we ought to a-run. But it did n't pay no more; and so we just worked the lower river and hauled wheat and such truck to St. Louis. And everybody said the way the Speed outlived all the others and kept on top of water was ridiculous. A high-toned passenger, that just went up to see the scenery, said the Speed was intact all over. And he said some day she 'd go off like the one hoss shay, whatever kind of an accident that

was—I don't know. But she could make some of them boats look ridiculous when it come right down to making a run.

Some ways she was like home. You stepped out of your kitchen at the back of the cabin, and there was your back yard on the engine-house, with your back-yard fence in front of the wheel. And you could step down and take a long walk outdoors on your sidewalk up to the boilers. It was just like living at home and seeing the scenery wind past. You could wheel a wheelbarrow all round that boat except the stern—only we did n't put the coal forward in wheelbarrows. That high-toned passenger wanted to know why we did n't use wheelbarrows instead of big boxes. But that would n't a-done at all; it only takes one man to wheel a wheelbarrow. A steamboat nigger can't work all alone that way, like an Irishman. And besides he could n't put no style into it. So you have to have a big bin with handles at each end, and then the niggers can coon-jine with it and see which team is the best. If you done any of them fancy steps with a wheelbarrow it would dump all the coal into the river; and what would be the sense in that? You can't run a Fort Benton boat that way. They don't make them that way no more; and, besides, when I was old enough to go on the river the Indians was all getting played out. I told Valdes about it; but he did n't seem to care much.

Well, while I was laying there thinking about the Indians, and how everything was going to the dogs, I began to hear a way-off sound like milking

a cow long and slow into a tin pail. I sat up and listened and then it got more like snoring and I stood up.

"I bet that 's the Speed," I says. "And it sounds down-stream."

Valdes was interested in that; he got up, too, and looked down river. But there was n't anything in sight.

"It can't be," he says. "We started after she did and we did n't pass her."

"Bet you sight unseen," I says, "it 'll be her that 'll come round them bluffs. I know her pipes. She must 'a' gone up the Osage for something—that 's what kept her."

We stood and watched; and pretty soon we seen her nose. Then her two tall stacks come trailing her smoke around the corner. I could see she was burning coal on that stretch, for it come out pretty black; and she laid it behind her in two long, straight lines—it was such a quiet summer day. And she had n't come far when you could see already it was Fourth of July on that boat. There was Blue and Red toting a bin up and down the hogways in fine style, with a smile on their faces and their big black chests sticking out; and them putting in the fancy steps like you 'd think a couple of hundred pounds of coal was n't nothing. There was Aunt Jemima picking chickens at the stern; and there was Griswold in his little polished boots and gray slouch hat standing in the bows, as straight as a jack-staff, and looking straight ahead like he always done; and there was

"Blue and Red toting a bin"

Lang up in the pilot-house. The old Speed was blowing the steam high and kicking up behind and taking it so easy you 'd think she was just laying on her back and stretching her lazy arms back and forth at the stern and snoring her way along. If there 's anything I like, it 's to see two columns of steam taking turns with each other blowing up on a fine clear day.

Well, I made motions with my arms and hollered through my hands and waved my red handkerchief till they seen us; and then that new whistle we got turned loose like the devil hollering for help. She swung inshore and shut down and sailed up alongside just as the staging was a-swinging out—a prettier landing than that Muscoutah EVER made. As soon as the end of the staging was low enough I jumped on and ran ahead and stood to see what would happen to Griswold when Valdes would come aboard with his valise.

Well, nothing happened—leastways nothing that you would notice if you did n't know the cards. You see it was like this; it was kind of like playing poker. When Valdes come up the gang-plank, Griswold suddenly lighted up with surprise and made a move and then stopped and passed it off his face like there was nothing doing—reason of which was that Valdes caught his eye the same as if he was looking straight through him and then glanced off over his head like he was a stranger that he never heard of. Nothing to it but wearing his own face pretty stern like he had a right to it and it belonged to him. And Griswold the same.

What passed between them was quicker than wink; and you can't very well tell about it when it AIN'T NOTHING. But there was something to it when you knew the cards like I did; and I bet when Griswold saw his old friend come back after ten years and pass him up like that HE had a pretty good idea it was something. And he seen it so quick you would n't a-noticed it. You take two fellows that 's used to poker, that way, and you can't hardly set your watch by their faces.

Valdes just went up to the office and seen his things put into the safe and went into the cabin and sat down. When I went out by the boilers and looked at Griswold he was just doing some cussing that he had to do to get the tackle working and bring the staging forward. I bet Griswold was doing some important waiting till Valdes would show his hand; but it was too deep for me. If it had been Clancy he would 'a' jumped Griswold on the spot; and there would a-been something done about it. And it would a-been worth while, too.

When I had made up an excuse for missing the boat and fixed it all right, I went back on the engine-house deck where Rags was. I searched him all over; and he seemed to be all right as well as I could make out under his thick hair. His tail was n't lame anyways; and all the time he was wagging it he stood with his head down like he was ashamed of me for being away from him like that. Dogs know how to make you understand some things.

By the time I got my coat off and my sleeves rolled back to catch up on my chores we were out into the channel again and settled down to a steady gait; and then I began to forget things and feel at home. After you 're used to it all you never do feel real at home unless she 's running. When she

"The fat captain in his arm-chair"

stops it 's like trying to sleep in a bed when you 're used to a cradle: I never could sleep well laying up at St. Louis. But when your bunk begins to quiver and get life into it you can roll right over and

snooze. Daytimes it 's the same; the engines go on keeping time until it 's worked right into you and you sort of expect things to go on that way regular without any end to it. And some fine day when you 're feeling real safe is when you get your comings.

But this was one of them days when it would n't be natural for anything to happen. Everybody was feeling good; and I says to myself, George Washington was smarter than all of them when he picked out early summer for the Fourth of July. There was the extra cook rolling biscuits with both hands and humming busy to himself in the pantry; and there was Lang up in the pilot-house whistling like a bird in a glass cage and standing with one foot on a spoke as he brought her along an easy channel; and there was Aunt Jemima singing "Sweet turtle-dove" back by the splash-board, and taking naked chickens out of one tub and putting them into another till she would get them all dressed; and there was the fat captain in his armchair that nearly filled the little office, a-twiddling his thumbs and looking happy at the clerk on his high stool turning over the bills of lading; and there was thirty roustabouts playing craps in the hold and all letting their breath out sudden when the dice rolled—like a wood-chopper when he heaves an ax (and the whole caboodle of them making more hard breaths than if they were chopping down a forest); and there was Blue and Red, which was our best coonjiners, toting a bin up and down the starboard hogway like it was a cake-walk and

"To wet the pilot's whistle"

them springing their knees and bending from side to side and wagging their heads like it was awful heavy, and working their wrists on the handles like it was n't, and putting so much power and style into it that you 'd think it was them that was shov-

ing the boat along; and there was the little freckle-faced tenor and his tall partner trying to do the same and singing "The old boat a-moverin', a-moverin' along"; and there was the engineer out on the fan-tail a-oiling up the crank; and there was the engines breathing deep and long, and the wheel slop-dashing the water up against the stern-sheathing like a whole waterfalls; and there was me getting a pitcher of ice-water ready and taking it clinking up the steep stair to wet the pilot's whistle; and there was a smell of scalded chicken. Them niggers could n't a-asked for a better Fourth of July.

Sometimes there was a little puff of a breeze astern that would take the smell of chicken feathers through the boat and up the hogways and give everybody to understand that everything was good. And I guess the biggest noise on that boat was the crap-shooters in the hold—which was all the roustabouts has to do between landings. To hear their breath a person would a-thought that the money went to the one that had the best lungs and could say "Huh" the strongest. Their breath made as much noise as the pipes. The exhaust of them thirty roustabouts sounded as if the Speed was carrying more power than any boat that ever steamed up that river. This day they were thinking of chicken and whooping it up to celebrate.

CHAPTER VII

A BLACK FOURTH OF JULY

HEN I come down from the pilot-house I went down into the hold to take a look; and just then the steward came through, giving warnings right and left.

"Don't you fellows take up your plate and crowd around the pantry door and grab stuff when it comes out this noon," he says. "Sit down at them trestles on the engine-room deck—that 's what they 're put there for—and when it comes you stay there and eat it. This grabbing stuff and going off and then throwing half of it away has got to stop."

"Yessah. We ain't gwine do dat." And they all smiled and nodded their heads. "We ain't gwine throw away no CHICKEN."

"This thing of grabbing your plate chuck full and then sitting along the hogways to eat and getting stuck on it and scraping it into the river won't do. Do you understand that?"

"Yessah. We 'se all gwine do good dis 'Mancipation Day. We ain't gwine throw away no CHICKEN."

Well, I hoped they did understand it. Whenever the dinner-bell rang they would all come tearing down the hogways and climb up atop of the engine-house like a lot of pirates. And about half of them would grab a tin plate apiece and wait at the gangway where they could get first reach when it come out. You come sailing out with a big pan of hominy and when you got to the ones at the table it would all be gone. Same way with the hog; you could n't rassle through the mob with it. Then the ones that got so much they were afraid somebody might steal it would sit along the edge with their feet hanging over the side. You 'd see the Speed going up the Missouri all lined round the edge with roustabouts with tin plates in their laps, and them all piled full of hominy and hog. At meal-times you could n't see anything but teeth and hominy —all mixed up. And sometimes molasses with grease poured all over and mixed up, too. They had good appetites. Well, I hoped they *did* understand what the steward said, because there were a couple of dozen of chickens and I had to help get the stuff to the trestles. When you take a big lot of boiled chicken through a lot of roustabouts that 's laying for you with knives and forks it ain't no easy job. It 's like being lynched.

"Remember that now," says the steward, looking back. "You don't fool around that way with chicken."

"All lined round the edge with roustabouts"

When I seen that they understood it I went up where Aunt Jemima was getting them ready.

"I 'clar to goodness, Honey," she says, when she seen it was me; "run an' put on dat white shirt befo' we gets to Scipio. I has it all laid out fo' you on de bunk. An' when de whistle blow you come an' stan' nice by my pantry do'. I specs dey 's gwine be heaps o' folks waitin' to see de Speed make de landin', an' we wants to make a good showin' dis heah 'Mancipation Day."

Well, I did n't listen to her no more. I went into my room; and there it was laid out all right—white and stiff, with its cuffs crossed on its bosom. I thought maybe I would put it on. But I could n't

make up my mind to do it. It was all buzz-sawy around the collar. I says to myself, 'this thing has gone far enough and if I don't put a stop to it there won't be no end of my standing out on deck just to show off her washing and have everybody notice how white it is. Just because I stood for her at Madison City I 'd have to put on a clean shirt EVERY holiday and maybe Sundays. Besides, there 'll only be a pack of black girls in red and blue and yellow dresses along with their fellows and I don't care for that town anyways. I did n't come from there. And it ain't nothing to me.'' So I went back and told her I was just going to wash my face and that was all; and I 'd show them how white I was. Well, she looked over her specs and picked off a few more pin-feathers and got the chickens all in one tub; and then she took hold of me and coaxed me to come and get a cooky in the pantry. And then she handed me a white shirt.

Just as she was putting that shirt into my hand, something happened. There come a smashing and a crashing of timber like a whole lumber-yard splitting up, and I seen Rags make a bee-line through the kitchen gangway into the cabin with his tail between his legs. The deck gave a thump and Aunt Jemima dropped the shirt and I got so excited that I stepped on the bosom of it; and then all of the crew that could leave their places come piling astern to see what had happened—the captain and the clerk and the mate and all the roustabouts from the hold. When I got out on the engine-deck they were all standing looking down

a big splintered hole at the water boiling before the wheel. A log had got caught in the wheel and come over endways and tore out part of the stern sheathing and ripped through the deck and gone through the back of the engine-room into the river again. It had n't broke the wheel or the steering-gear or touched the machinery; the hull was n't damaged much and everything was going along the same.

But the chickens was gone. That log had hit smack on that tub of chickens and took it along. It did n't even leave the place where Aunt Jemima was sitting. And she was standing giving "thanks to de Lawd" that he had sent her to make me put on a white shirt. There was the crew looking down where the water was churning like a flour-mill, and saying how it did n't amount to so much and was n't serious and so on (but they did n't know yet that the chickens had been setting there).

When I let out what the real accident was that crew commenced to turn solemn. They sloped away to different parts of the boat looking sour and sad. And I says to myself, "There won't be no grabbing of chicken this Fourth of July." The river done all the grabbing. That was when things got a start to go wrong. And all they need is a start.

When we got to Scipio there was a lot of them all over the bank in their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes to see the Speed come in. But there was n't much doing on the Speed. The girls all waved their handkerchiefs to the crew; but some of them did n't even come out of the hold. Red and Blue

did n't put on any fancy moves; it was just plain work and putting coal forward. We got away from there without much good-by. Down in the hold there were a few crap games; but they were jawing and looking ugly and just trying to get one another's money. A distance above Scipio we struck a sort of sawyer that was under water. It went thundering and ramming along the bottom in a way to make your hair stand up; but them roustabouts sat on bottom and never batted an eye. They did n't have no more to lose. You could n't a-disturbed them if you 'd a-blowed up the boilers.

At the next landing they did n't work like Griswold wanted them to; they did n't liven up and

"That crew commenced to turn solemn."

get any spirit or style into the loading. When they was passing him they would take a couple of quick steps and then poke along again. Then Griswold got on his ear. He looked around and got a barrel stave and fetched a tall nigger a clip on the shins and then stood there as the line passed; and he laid it on any one that come handy. They did n't seem to move right and Griswold got worse and worse.

At the next landing they had to roll barrels on. When they had got into line and had them going pretty well the little freckled tenor rolled one crooked and it went right off the gang-plank into the river. Griswold grabbed him and give a fancy twist that sent him into the river after it. He swam around and fished it out and got in line with it again and just made a wet track up the middle of the gang-plank without saying a word.

Next thing the Speed done was to find a sand bar. Lucky for us we were running slow and feeling our way because Lang was in doubt; so we just run our nose on it and backed off without having to do any sparring. Lang was kind of mixed up on that bottom; things seemed to have been shifting about, so we put two niggers out in the yawl to row ahead and find the way with the painted pole. After considerable poking around and hollering the depths we crawled out of there on five feet and got into the channel again. Then we pelted along and things looked like they were going to settle down and straighten out. Everything was the same as usual except down in the hold. It was gloomy and disgusted down there. And some of them looked

as if the fine weather made them tired. Blue and Red was down there now because another team had been put in their place; and they were playing craps and disagreeing about every little thing. The way they could find something to fight about every time the dice rolled out you 'd never think they

"Two niggers out in the yawl"

was partners at all. But you could n't expect any different. When you 're all fixed for Fourth of July dinner it 's kind of aggravating to have an accident to the chickens.

Aunt Jemima and the extra cook were rassling an ordinary dinner together and it was going to be late. While I was sawing stove-wood to hurry things along, that high-toned passenger come back

to get a drink out of the water-barrel. I showed him which barrel had just been filled and which one had the worst of the mud settled to the bottom and he could take his choice whichever way he liked it. He was the fellow that was along last trip and he had stayed on and come right over again. He gathered rocks to study the insides of them and looked at the scenery with a double-barreled spy-glass. He was a professor of something taking a vacation and he had come up there to improve his mind. He was glad he come again. He said it was worth it. He said he would almost like to come another trip if he was real sure that nothing serious would happen. He was real educated and I said to myself that he would know how the bore-holes got away up on them rocks if anybody would.

Just when I started to ask him about it there was the devil to pay. There was a ringing in the engine-room and a sound of running back and forth in the hold and a yelling and talking all together; and then the engines shut down. There was a creaking of the tackle up forward; and when I ran and looked round the corner of the cabin the gang-plank was just swinging out over an island in the middle of the river.

"Keep quiet—don't get excited. We 'll all be able to get to land," says the Professor. And he was so excited himself that he jumped off the engine-house and made a break for the bows.

Just as he got there I saw Blue and Red go marching up the staging—and it not more than half lowered—with Griswold walking behind and

driving them along. And when them two come to the end they went off the toe of Griswold's boot into the willows of that island. There was blood dripping from Blue's left ear and Red had his fist clenched. The whole black crew had swarmed out on the main decks to look at them two being left on that place.

The Professor come back slow and climbed up where I was and says to me, "They are marooned." At that I jumped down and ran forward to find if it was true. But it was n't anything of the kind. There was n't anything to it except that the mate put them off onto the island. You see they got into an argument and Red he up and went at Blue with a hatchet; but he only struck him a glancing blow and cut his ear some. And just as Griswold come to settle the trouble he seen the island and the idea what to do about it popped right into his head. So now them two could stay alone together on the island and have it out. Well, them two was big and black and matched like a team of horses—one just as strong as the other—and I could n't see how it was ever going to come out. I says to myself, "I don't see how EITHER of them is ever going to get the best of the other." But Griswold thought of it in a second and put them off and left them there to do it. Would n't that take the lead out of your pencil?

We were a little slow pulling out of there and getting headway again. And when we was about three hundred yards above the island we seen Blue and Red come out of the willows and both stand at

the head of it shaking their fists together at the ones on the boat. And then Red opened up his mouth and threw out his chest and called across the water like he was giving soundings, long and slow and plain:

"'No chicken nohow!'"

"Yo-u-u-u NIGGERS! Yo-u-u-u ain't—gwine—hab—no—chicken—NOHOW!"

I could see that done both of them a heap of good. And then they grew smaller and smaller and faded out of sight standing there together on that empty island.

It was after dinner-time and all them niggers was complaining about being hungry.

"Aunt Jemima," I says, "I 'll set the tables if you let me ring the bell."

"Go on an' do it, Honey. We 's gwine soon be ready."

I got the four trestles and slammed the big tops, which were like barn-doors, on them, one on each side of the exhaust-pipes where they belonged. Then I got a stack of tin plates on my arm and done it without making but one miss—and that is pretty near as good as a steward can do. All you have to do is to stand a little piece back with the plates on your arm and sail them out to their places like you was dealing cards. If one don't go just on the spot you can kind of straighten it out when you put the knives and forks around. It ain't nothing when you know how—but everybody can't learn it. It took me weeks and weeks and I had to get them plates from the cook and practise between meal-times. When I had the knives and forks around I got the two molasses cans and socked each in the middle of its table and says to the cook, "Are you ready?"

"Ready," he says.

"Let her go," I says, and rang the bell.

About the sixth clap out of that bell it was n't any use to ring it any more; they was mostly all there and the rest coming. They come stampeding down the hogways and tumbling up on the engine-house and making more noise than I was; but I took my ring out of that bell anyhow. By the time I was done they had grabbed up their plates and crowded round the first panful that come out of the kitchen and cleaned it out. When they had tackled everything that come out and got their plates heaped up they started off to sit along the edge of the boat. Then the steward come.

"You fellows sit right down at that table," he says. "Don't think that what I said don't count just because it ain't chicken. I 've seen the mate and if you eat along them hogways he 'll fix your hash and fix it good."

That made it look different. They did n't care for the steward; he was only a cook. But they cared for Griswold you bet.

CHAPTER VIII

TROUBLE DOES SOME MORE BREWING

WHEN that was done I had to go down in the engine-room to find whether the engineer was coming up to the first or second table in the cabin. The engineer was oiling up the slides and touching the cross-head quick with his fingers whenever it passed to see if it was running hot; and the old carpenter was putting up some boards temporary where the hole had been stove in the back, and when I told the steward what they said I come back to watch the carpenter hammering.

I had n't been down there hardly a minute when something started like wild horses tearing loose over my head. It come sudden all at once; and I heard them niggers jumping up together and tumbling over each other and clearing out in all directions with their heavy shoes pounding on that

drumhead of a roof and making more noise than if a bluff was falling on us in chunks. I made a run to get from under, because I was beginning to get RATTLED. When I got to the little doorway of the engine-room that opens on the hogway, it was all choked up with niggers crowding with their backs to it and shutting off the light. I ran across the boat to the other and it was the same.

The engineer

"Git away from that door," says the engineer, and he come and hit them on the shins with a monkey-wrench. When they felt that they moved over and let his light in again; and I got out and went up on deck.

It was n't nothing. But it looked like it was going to happen again, so I went quick up the stairs and stood on the hurricane deck where there was the whole roof of the cabin to run back on. You see them exhaust-pipes used to collect hot water down in themselves and when there got to be a lot it would choke them so that they would have a spasm and cough it up. They were big tall pipes that blew high, and when they started to get rid of a few bucketsful it would rain boiling water that would scald a chicken. That 's why them niggers got out of there quicker than scat, each one grabbing up his plate. They were scattered in the

farthest corners with their plates in their hands but no place to go to and eat.

First place they could n't eat on the hogways because the mate would be after them; and they could n't come up where I was on the hurricane because that was higher than ANY niggers was allowed; and they could n't very well sit down at them tables because the pipes was gurgling and googling so that you could n't tell when they was going to cough up more. Only place to go was down in the hold again; but that was kind of risky because you had to go forward by the boilers to get down there and the mate was standing in the bows. But one at a time they sneaked up the hogways and stole behind the boilers when he was n't looking; and that way they all got down. Well, the clerk he stepped out over the boilers and when he looked down and seen what they was doing he started to laugh. That kind of made me mad; and I says to myself, "What is that clerk laughing about?" It might 'a' been funny when them chickens went over, but this was too much. It 's funny how some people can laugh at other people having bad luck; and there ain't nothing funny about that. Suppose HIS Fourth of July come along and he lost all his firecrackers and then his powder got wet and his punk would n't burn and then he got some old cheap powder and then did n't have no place to shoot it; how would HE feel? I sort of felt bad for them niggers sitting down there on bags and barrels with their plates on their laps—except them that spilled it and did n't have none. They forgot

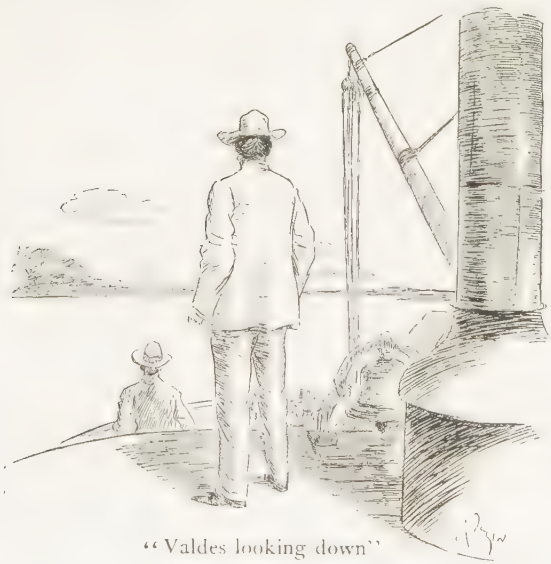
the molasses can, so I took it down and passed it around. That pork was n't half done either; and they just sat down and found fault, and ate some hominy and looked sour.

"I jes' wish we would run 'longside anothah island," says the big tall nigger.

"I does, too," says the little tenor. "I wish't we was 'MANCIPATED f'om dis heah BOAT."

Griswold he was getting worse and drove them like all fury at the landings. But that ain't nothing. They don't mind just that—because that 's regular. When a lot of niggers gets to trotting all together in line there 's got to be someone standing 'longside whooping her up and cussing different ones and making things lively; then it 's steamboating and they all take an interest. That 's part of the business and makes it important, and they would feel lost if the mate did n't run it like it ought to be. Griswold always sailed right in and was a good mate because he was a bad man; but this day there was something different about it. You could see it sticking right out of his eye and hear it sharper in his voice. When he cussed and fetched anybody a clip he MEANT it. This was n't regular nigger-driving at all. And you bet they began to see it and was afraid of him.

Well, I come up from the hold by way of the bows and when I looked up toward the pilot-house there was Valdes standing up on the edge of the deck right over the boilers, looking down on Griswold. And there was Griswold standing in the bows, looking straight ahead. And Valdes was looking



"Valdes looking down"

down on him like a hawk that was thinking of the time when he would swoop down and nab him. Well, it looked to me as if all them accidents was n't nothing; but something was likely to happen on that trip yet. It beat me why he just sat around cool in the cabin or come up and took another look at Griswold that way without pitching into him. I thinks to myself, "Maybe he 's one of the kind that gathers it up inside of themselves like them exhaust-pipes." Whenever that kind gets ready to let it out somebody better stand from under. But it was too deep for me; so I kept my mouth

shut about what I knew and waited. I did n't like Griswold anyhow.

When I got back to the kitchen again Aunt Jemima was coming out with a tub and nothing in it but my shirt.

"You go up to de office, Honey, an' say to de cap'n dat Aunt Jemima 's gwine wash. An' she want to know has he got anyfing he want to put in."

"You need n't bother about THAT shirt," I says. "That shirt 's pretty near clean."

"Look heah, chile. See dat footstep on yo' bosom?—does yo' see dat? You fink I 's gwine hab folks see you in dat down in Madison City. You hesh up an' go on now."

I seen it was n't no use. So before I went I looked up toward the pilot-house to see if the Captain had gone up there yet. He ought to 'a' been up there by this time, standing around to find out if Lang would say something funny about things. He was used to having things done for him like that. He was so used to having somebody to do everything that he would n't even take the trouble to see a joke for hisself.

It ain't nothing to be a river captain. He 's got the pilot to steer for him and the clerk to add for him and the cook to cook for him and the mate to cuss for him and everybody to do everything. Some 's big and some 's little—but that don't make no difference—and ours was big and fat. If anything happened he would just smile and put it off till Lang would say it right to laugh at. They

thought Lang was awful funny. You see he was always up there by himself or standing with his back to folks in the pilot-house a-listening and saying nothing. And when he got it all boiled down what they was talking to each other about he would chip in and say it off quick so it would n't take time from his steering. And it would be short and funny.

But all a captain has to do is to be aboard and show himself around and then everything goes right. He could boss anybody if he wanted to—except the pilot. The pilot he knows the river and the captain he knows the shore and everybody that lives on it; so there is n't anything left for him to do but be sociable with everybody. He knows how to talk to farmers and they are all glad to tell him about the crops and be acquainted with the captain of a boat; and the passengers sit at the table and talk to him and they feel safe when they know the captain; and the city men down at St. Louis slap him on the back and call him Cap. And he gets to feeling sociable with everybody because you see we did n't belong to no place in particular. Only them ocean boats that go away out of sight of land and get away from home where there is foreigners belongs to some place and has the town painted on the stern so that strangers will know what government is looking out for them. But pshaw! that would n't work on the river boat; they 've got to belong to all them towns. Why, different towns would bring important visitors down to see us, and if the Speed was n't in they would

apologize. They counted us in for a piece of the town same as the main factory—only we had a license to run up and down. We belonged to all of them; and the captain the same. He did n't go off to no foreign countries. That boat could n't a belonged to one town no more than a freight-train could. And the captain run up and down through everybody's property so much—and him always at home and people looking up to him—that it was like owning the shore. You see a river captain is a kind of a sailor and a farmer and a hotel-keeper all mixed up; and he gets to feeling that way and knows a good joke when visitors tell it. But the main thing is just to be Cap; and when he ain't being sociable with folks he can just sit around and be it.

When I went in the office the clerk said the captain had just stepped out. Then I heard his footsteps overhead and I thinks to myself, "He is going up now to hear what Lang has been thinking up about things." In about a minute I heard him start to cackle like a hen that just laid an egg. When the captain laughed the clerk stopped writing and started to snigger. I asked him what *He* was laughing about. He said that Lang must 'a' got off some kind of a funny joke. I asked him what it was and he said he did n't know but he guessed he 'd find out at supper-time. He was kind of foolish that way. There 's a lot of people that when they get to thinking a person 's funny they start right in and laugh as soon as he opens his mouth; and if it ain't no good they 'll think maybe it is and laugh anyway. He was that way;

and sometimes he 'd even laugh at what I 'd say when I knew it was n't a joke at all. He used to write a good deal of credit for shippers till I guess he got to thinking everybody was honest and would pay; but when it comes to laughing at people's jokes that way, it 's going too far. I told him so and he laughed. Then I asked him if he thought the joke he was going to hear was maybe as funny as a nigger losing his dinner—and blamed if he did n't laugh at that. I never could make him out. But you 'd think he was smart to see him writing in a book all the time.

When I got up to the pilot-house the captain and the pilot was smiling and saying something about Griswold and then looking sly and satisfied at each other and saying some more about how the mate had his war-paint on and how serious he was taking it. And they said the funniest of all was the way he sailed into them at the landings, and then went and stood as solemn as a graven image in the bows till it was time to sail into them again. Then the Captain stood with his hands in his pockets and give the pilot a kind of a left-eyed look and said Griswold never did have no sense of humor anyways. But he said he was the best mate of his inches that ever come up them waters and the whole business started on account of that blame tub of chickens. I stood around and listened till Aunt Jemima come out below and hollered up whether I was taking time to make the captain's shirts. So then I asked him about it and went down and told her. She said it took me awful long.

"Well," I says to myself, "they think they know a good joke when they don't; and the real part of it ain't happened yet." Anybody ought to 'a' seen that. What ailed Griswold was n't just that them niggers was a little slow. It was something else that was the matter inside of him and it was just working out that way. Valdes he was sitting in the cabin now, cleaning his finger-nails and getting ready to do nobody-knows-what: and I bet if he ever started in, Griswold would n't be doing none of his steamboat-mating with him. But I did n't say nothing; I did n't want to get mixed up in it.

Things run along about that way all afternoon—landings the same as ever. Towards dusk I found out we were going to turn back that night at Bender's freight-house. That Osage trip had taken up some time and we must get back to St. Louis when we were due. And then something else come out. When Preston—he was the night pilot and had a full license—was going up to take the wheel the captain met him and slapped him hearty on the back.

"Well, Preston, how would you feel about making a try for that gold eagle for the pilot-house?"

"All right," says Preston. "Goin' to do it now, Cap?"

"Guess this is a good time. Griswold 's on his ear and he 'll make things hum; he just feels like it. Well, I 'll get young pig and postpone Fourth of July till to-morrow and let them hungry niggers know it; they 'll all get busier than ever and Griswold will keep them going. We 'll make quick time at landings. This is the time to do it."

"Goin' to do it now, Cap?"

"Guess you 've got it figured out—so let her go," says Preston; and he went up the stairs.

"Gee whillikins!" I says; and when the Captain was gone into the cabin I stood on my hands up against the kitchen and thinks to myself, "We are going to bust the record."

Them elevator men was certainly hogs for wheat; and they liked the old Speed because she could shove it down. And I bet they 'd be surprised when we come down to St. Louis with last Fourth of July all busted to pieces. They said we could n't beat that record for a gold eagle. That 's why we was going to do it. While I was thinking how we would do it, some one come out of the gangway again, and it was the Captain; so I come down on my feet again and stood right.

"Sammy," he says to me," I want you to take three or four of the niggers and go away back to that cross-roads saloon I sent you to one time. Tell the man I want four good shoats. You can take each of you one of Bender's wheat sacks to carry them in."

He started away and I was just going to finish doing it when he come back.

"And Sammy," he says, "when you 're bringing the shoats aboard make them squeal some so that they 'll all hear them and know what's in the bags. Let everybody know they 're THERE."

"All right, Captain," I says. "You bet I 'll make my pig squeal."

"I guess I can depend on you for that," he says; and this time he went up the stairs.

CHAPTER IX

THE PIGS AND THEIR PURPOSE

WE stuck our flambeau into the bank at Bender's about ten o'clock that night; and right away I took three niggers with wheat sacks and a lantern and started out with the money in my hip pocket. I told them niggers to keep a-moving because we did n't have much time; and I thinks to myself, "We 've got a good deal of time, because this is the turn." We 'd have to unload and load both and that would give us double time. Besides that I heard the engineer say to the captain that there was a tarnation of mud in things and it would n't do till it was tended to; so I guessed they would be fooling with the doctor and maybe blow off the boilers some and try to get things right; and anyway they would n't start again till they had the old safety-valve a-sputtering and that would maybe give me more time.

"Then I piloted straight ahead with the lantern"

I would like to a-seen inside of them boilers. The old one that did n't go up when the other blew out her man-hole had more scale in it than there was ashes in the fire-box, I heard. The fellow said so that took away the pieces. I bet there was too. So we pegged out along a kind of a wagon track across the open, with the tall nigger ahead carrying the lantern so we could see a couple of ruts to go by.

After a while that road faded plum out on the grass. We went on and walked to one side and then the other, and then round and round to find where it started in again; but we did n't find it and the only thing was we got our direction all mixed up.

"This won't do at all," I says. "We 've got to start in right and go straight ahead, road or no road, and take her as she comes."

And then blame if we did n't have to hunt all over to find where we was before. I seen it was getting mighty serious, because, you see, if I did n't

get them shoats the whole business would n't work that they was getting ready for, and we would n't bust that Fourth of July record. And the captain was depending on me.

"This here kind of business won't do at all," I says. So then I counted them niggers—but I can't see niggers very well in the dark—and I told them to follow me while I circled round and zigzagged till I found where we was. Pretty soon I found where it left off and got started again; so then I piloted straight ahead with the lantern and stuck to the middle of the road where it ought to be.

After a while I seen a light away off to the right about as big as a lightning bug; and I says to myself, "We 'll go over there, because no decent people don't stay up this late at night, and maybe it 's a saloon." It was a long distance to go out of the way; but you 've got to take your chances. And anyway whoever was sitting up there could tell me where the saloon was.

Well, that was the place. The boss was sitting up playing cards with a couple of old loafers; and when he heard us coming after ten o'clock at night, and seen us with bags on our arms, he jumped up like he thought it was the James gang coming to clean him out. But when I showed him the money and started to talk business he changed right over and was polite.

We made an awful surprise inside that pig-pen with the lantern; but the tall nigger and the boss caught three likely shoats by the hind legs and dropped them head foremost into the sacks and tied

"When I showed him the money he changed right over"

them up. It 's the only way you can get the best of a pig. The Captain had told me to get four; so I guessed I would take a smaller sized one out of the other litter because I could n't manage such big ones. "Give me one a couple of sizes smaller," I says. He got me one; and I would n't take it at first because I thinks to myself, "He is trying to work off the runt on me." And I told him so. But he said he would n't try that on me and he showed me a little peaked-nosed pig over in the corner that was one too many for its mother and did n't have no place at her; so it always got crowded away and had to come and take the leavings—which there was n't any. So when I seen how fat and healthy mine was beside him I seen mine was no runt at all. So I took him.

When we got back to the saloon and I finished up the bargain and counted out the money, the saloon-keeper seen I was the boss; and he asked me what would I have to drink. So I stood up to the bar and said I would take some Missouri peach brandy in a saucer and burned off with a match. That 's good for a cold. I did n't have no cold but that 's what I always drink. When I blowed off the fire and drunk it down, them niggers looked discouraged and got glummer than when they lost the chicken. So I recommended to the boss that he better give them some gin if he wanted me to come here for shoats again. He did n't want to give nothing to no niggers; but I told him this was Emancipation Day for white folks and niggers both and they had n't had nothing; and, besides, we

was going to bust the record and them niggers was mighty important, and things must start in to going right. Well, when he found it was a steamboat race he perked right up and out with a whole bottle of gin and wanted to get up a bet with the other two fellows about it; and they up and out with their money. He followed me outside and whispered to me; and I told him he could put his money on us because when the Speed laid out to do a thing she was a-going to do it; and then I had to shake hands and be hiking out of there.

We went along through the dark with the pigs kicking and squealing in the bags; me carrying the lantern on my arm, with the niggers following in line just like I said. They carried their shoats on their backs, with the ends of the bags over their shoulders, and I did too; but mine was always trying to run up me. He kicked and scratched my back so much that I took him in my arms and hugged him around the middle, with his legs to the front; and that way he kicked out into the air; but he kept rassling round and trying to run. Once he got the best of me and I fell down and he tried to run with me on top of him. But he did n't run far in the bag; he just fell round this way and that with the bag flopping every-which-way like a chicken with its head chopped off; and he could n't get nowheres; so I grabbed him up and got him tight again.

When I went down the lantern went out; but that did n't make no difference as long as there was n't no road to go by; I just kept the light of

the saloon off to the point where it was when we first saw it like a gover'ment light; and that was enough to steer by. The pig squirmed and twisted; and then he kicked me a good one right in the face and I went down; and from the direction he kicked I knew what my mistake was—I had been carrying him upside down. So I got him again and felt careful which end his head was on and then I carried him right side up like you 'd ought to carry a baby; and that way I kind of got him quieted down and feeling it was n't no use.

When that saloon light was so far away it went clean out, I just kept right on to see what we 'd run into; because you 've mostly got to take your chances anyways. I told them niggers to stick to me; and after a while I saw a red glare shining away off over the edge of the river bank; and that was what I was looking for. Well, it was a good thing they had the flambeau out, because the headlight ain't no good to find a steamboat behind a high bank; it don't shine up; it only goes in a streak and lights up a spot. But when that old iron basket was all full of pine, and blazing and standing up on its iron rod that was socked into the bank, it was a bonfire about seven feet up in the air; and you bet that shone up and down and all around and lit things up for everybody.

When we got to the top of the bank the last of the niggers was running aboard with wheat sacks on their shoulders; and the old safety-valve was sputtering; and the Captain was atop of the cabin looking all around; and the wheel was fluttering

Bringing in the shoats

kind of impatient while the engineer tried things slow to see how they worked; and the exhaust-pipes were heaving breaths so long and deep that you 'd think she was a-sighing to get out of there and be off. So then I turned my pig discomfortable upside down and squeezed him under my arm; and we

come a-marching down the bank a-squealing like a whole bagpiper band—I bet I could 'a' played "The Campbells is a-Coming" on my pig; he was a good one—and all the niggers on the hogways looked up with the whites of their eyes all thankful and smiling like we was bringing help. So we come up the staging and across the hogways and the staging began to lift and she began to move. Then we was going to soon be started.

We started slow up-stream and circled round on the down course. Bender himself was standing on the bank with a lantern and a watch in his hand; and he swung the lantern to us and yelled "Yahoo!" and the bell went dingle-dangle down in the engine-room and then she began to thump her up behind. She started in like a horse with the heaves, and the moon began to sail.

I went and stood up on top near the Captain; and by that time she was going all over and full of it from end to end like an old speed factory just started up to turn it out steady all night long; and only from the feeling of it you would n't know you was going much except you seen something ashore. The moon ain't very satisfactory except you get the edge of a bluff right on the rim of her —then she rolls along lively; but once in a while I 'd see a farm-house where they was up late moving through the trees; and then sometimes a white-washed post with a gover'ment light would be nearer and go faster; and sometimes an old dead white cottonwood tree would go hurrying through the night like a ghost that had to get back before

the graveyard was closed. Pretty soon the motion of it got us all settled down and warmed up, with everybody's feelings keeping time with the engines; and the coonjiners got it worked into them and began to roll along with the fancy motions and sing:

De Lord tole Noah to build him an old ark;
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along—
De old ark a-moverin', a-moverin', a-moverin';
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along.

Den Noah an' his sons went to work upon de dry land:
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along—
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin', a-moverin',
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along.

Den Noah an' his sons went to work upon de timber;
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along;
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin', a-moverin',
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along.

Well, that song has more to it than you 'd think, unless you sung it along twenty or thirty miles; and it 's longer than from Booneville to St. Louis, but the words is easy to learn. After them two coonjiners started they got to going in the hold—music is awful catching among niggers—and then all them laying around on the wheat down there, with nothing to do but put their feet up and think of the Fourth coming special to-morrow, starts to chip in; and then the whole load of them, from the tall fellow that sung bass down to the little freckled tenor, was a-going:

De proud began to laugh an' de silly pint der finger;
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along;
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin', a-moverin',
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along.

That 's the way that night started up, with the coonjiners shuffling along like they was the whole machinery, and the wheel keeping time with them, and the headlight shining out before, and the pipes a-blowing, and the furnaces shooting the red glare out over the bows into the night with the firemen stripped to the waist as black as coal and throwing it into the fire-boxes, and Griswold standing stern in the red firelight like a little devil in a hell of his own with the iron doors clanging open and shut.

It did n't seem no time at all till we made the next landing. The whistle blowed and the bell rang and the singing shut off like the engineer had stopped it when he slowed the wheel; and when we had gone far enough below that landing we circled round and came up to it just so. You see on the Missouri you 've got to make a landing with your nose up-stream no matter which direction you 're running; it has a current and ain't like them poky rivers. And with your flat stern and the big wheel behind it's better to turn tail and let it stop you and come up against it with the bows than to try to fight it out by reversing the engines. Then you tie up with your bow splitting the current and it ain't so hard on the ropes nor nothing.

While we was making the turn Griswold yapped out like a terrier in the hold; and all them niggers

jumped up from the wheat sacks and landed on their feet in a jiffy; and before we touched the bank he had them woke up to business till they was marking time all in a line and walking on one spot because there was no place to go to. But when that gang-plank struck shore there was a place to

"Griswold took his place with the barrel-stave"

go to and you bet they went. Two of the niggers ran out with the flambeau burning like a two-man torch and rammed her into the dirt; and then you could see that file of niggers chasing past it like a procession on a theater stage that never has no end to it. Griswold took his place with the barrel stave and turned himself loose the worst I ever saw. There was the torch on one side with the pine-knots going like red tongues licking the night, and there was Griswold on the other side doing all the cussing he could lay tongue to—and I guess one of them could n't 'a' made it any warmer for them than the other; he was pretty fiery. No matter how they hustled, Griswold could n't get it out of his head that they was slow; and it was like running the gauntlet the way them two files passed each other—one loaded and the other empty—and pouring that wheat aboard like the endless chain in the elevator. We did n't fool long at that landing. When the last sack was coming aboard the bonfire was pushed over and soused in the river; and then the flambeau clattered on deck with the rope after it, and the staging come up and the bell rung in the engine-room, and we circled round and pelted on again towards St. Louis. The niggers was all feeling fine.

We ran along low, undercut shore for a while and then we made the crossing over to the face of the high bluffs on the other side, where the channel followed the flat wall and scooted along. That 's what I like; you can see how you are going. When a wall like that is going past three or four feet

away and you are holding her to it to catch every inch of the current, and the headlight is racing along it and you are putting the speed on top of a five-mile current, then you can see you are going some. You look at the wall for a mile or so right before your eyes and it is like running a race down in the deep locks of a canal; them Missouri walls is straight up and down. And Preston could hold her to it; he was good.

Well, it was getting pretty late, but I did n't feel like going to bed that night, somehow. Griswold was staying right up, tending to things, and the Captain was up yet. And blame if that school professor was n't up and walking up and down on top of the cabin like he had to be on watch too. I went and sat on a trestle on the engine-house, because that 's where I like it best to feel things a-going. That school professor seemed to be just itching to talk and be company with somebody that belonged on the boat and had done it before. But all of them had things to tend to without talking to him.

At last he turns and comes down on the engine-house and I could see that he was coming to ask me questions and I would have to be saying No to everything he said. He sit down on the trestle with me and made up to me and wanted to know if this boat had ever done this before and was she a good boat and a lot of stuff. And I told him No, we would n't blow up or strike a snag or a sawyer or run onto a sand bar or anything unless it was an accident, and what was the use of talking about that; who can help an accident? Anyways, Preston

knew the channel. Then he got to talking about the river and what Preston knew, and I seen he wanted me to talk and be sociable with him for company.

"It 's a very crooked river and swift," he says. "I suppose its crookedness makes it hard to remember and dangerous. And I hear that it shifts its bed, travelling sideways sometimes."

"Pshaw!" I says, "that ain't half of its crookedness. Anybody could see *that* crookedness just by looking."

"What other crookedness is there?" he says. "And does n't the pilot go by looking?"

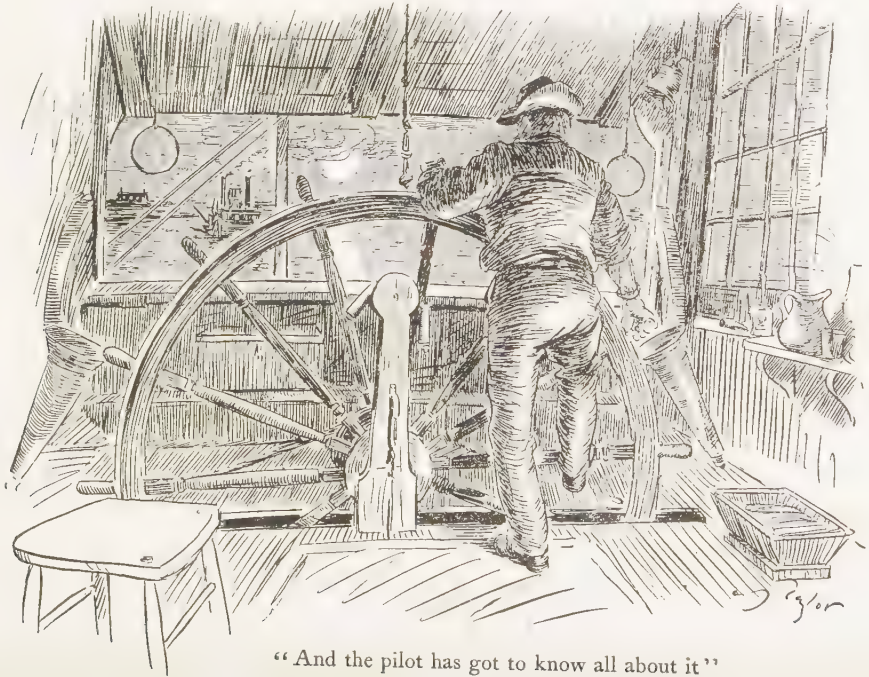
I seen he did n't know nothing.

"Well," I says, "seeing you don't know nothing I 'll tell you all about the river. Some rivers knows some tricks and other rivers knows others, but the Missouri knows the whole business and does it. This part of the river used to be about a mile over there where there 's farms; and there used to be farms right here where we 're running—that 's how she shifts sideways sometimes. And sometime she might go back again if she don't like it here. That 's easy enough for it to do, because the banks is awful crumbly where there ain't rock ridges. It eats under them, and when the bank is all hollow underneath and can't support its weight no more it breaks away and falls in with a noise about like an elephant. She 's always doing it one place and another—takes it away somewheres else if it needs it; and if it don't she takes it down and drops it into the Gulf of Mexico and chokes up the Mississippi. That 's why she 's called the Big Muddy. But how

"I seen he did n't know nothing '

she works it—that is a different thing. I 'll tell you how she works it. Then you 'll see what the pilot 's got to get by heart and then forget. The bed of this river and the channel of it is two different things. The channel is just the deepest and swiftest part. You hear people say that still water runs deep; but that ain't so—never was so. Deep water is the swiftest, because the top water slides along on the water below and it can naturally run slicker than shallow water that is rubbing along on bottom. This river is shallow where it looks deep and you could n't hardly float a tub on it; and the pilot has got to know where it 's deep enough to go up, and not too swift; and he 's got to know where it 's good and swift when he 's breaking the Fourth of July record like we 're doing down river right now. To look at it some people would think it was just a plain river running along in its bed at the same speed—but it ain't. The river runs crooked through the valley; and just the same way the channel runs crooked through the river. The river changes whenever it feels like it in the valley; and just the same the channel changes whenever it feels like it in the river. The crookedness you can see ain't half the crookedness there is. Some rivers has the channel right down the middle; and that is the deepest and swiftest part. But this river ain't that way. Some places the channel runs down the middle; and some places it flows right up along one shore and then crosses over and flows along the other shore a while. That 's how it comes to be moving sideways; and the way it works it you can

see easy when I tell you. This channel ain't satisfied with nothing. Sometimes it ain't satisfied with the Missouri. So it keeps eating away one bank and caving it in and hurrying it away like you think it was going to break out sideways and start a river of its own. It *would* too; but the Missouri is too wise for it; it won't have no such a thing. When the channel gets right over to shore and the main waters is coming deep and swift and working away, the shallower water on the other side is going along slower and thinking to itself and dropping down the mud it has been bringing hundreds of miles, maybe. It says to itself, 'This thing has got to be settled right here'; so it settles down the mud to the bottom. That way it keeps building up one side; and when it is doing that it kind of slides sideways on it and builds up more; it keeps the river about the same width, no matter how fast it is eating on the other side. I guess this channel would 'a' left the river long ago only the river follows it up and is too blame smart for it. The Missouri is a wise old river and it knows the tricks—but it 's got a shifty channel to manage. Well, when that channel has gone sideways a while, maybe a new channel gets started in a mushier place on bottom; and when that is getting to be pretty much of a success the main waters goes there to help a good thing along—same as people. Then the old channel ain't doing much and it has got to go to work and crawl back and build up where it tore down—that 's the way it is; nothing certain about it. But mostly when she has struck a stone bluff the waters hurries



"And the pilot has got to know all about it"

along and is mad about it and stays right there, working hard and swift. That 's why we are crossing back and forth to the bare bluffs so much. And when we go over the river that way it 's a crossing. Pshaw! this is the greatest river in the world and the wisest river there is. Some rivers, if they did n't hit the trail oftener than this does, would n't know the way anywhere. They 'd get so mixed up they 'd start emptying into themselves, I guess. But you would n't know it to look at it; you 'd think it was just a plain river running along between its banks."

"I see," he says. "And the pilot has got to know all about that channel besides what he can see. How does he keep track of it so it 's safe—and in the night this way?"

"Well, he knows how it was; and when the river changes he changes his mind. He watched how it was when he come up. He could say it right off for hundreds of miles, and he criss-crosses back and forth. You 've got to pay as close attention as if you was reading a book. And when you 're in doubts about anything it makes you as tired of life when you get done as if you had read a book clean through. Pshaw! this is the greatest river in the known world. The Mississippi ain't nothing till this river comes along and shows it the tricks. The Ohio ain't nothing. It 's short and poky."

Well, he up and says maybe I was prejidiced and was doing some boasting. "Boasting nothing," I says. "Why, the Missouri is longer than the Mis-

sissippi and holds more water and shoots it along livelier. It 's bigger."

"What!" he says. "Think of the Mississippi from St. Louis to the Gulf—is n't that bigger?"

"What kind of talk is that?" I says. "Of course it is if you 're going to add the Missouri and count it IN. What 's the Mississippi by itself? The Missouri comes out above St. Louis over three thousand miles long; and there comes the Mississippi just a little over half that long and it only a stream—clear and slow; a regular country stream. Then the Missouri sails in and shows it the tricks and broadens it out and makes something out of it—and you are going to count THAT in for the Mississippi. But s'pose you do; I 'll let you. The Mississippi goes three thousand miles from its head to the Gulf. Well, the Missouri is a LITTLE longer than that before it ever goes into partnership with the Mississippi. You think it 's awful far to go twelve hundred miles from St. Louis to New Orleans without changing steamboats. Why, when this boat was running up to Fort Benton—which is only part of the Missouri—it beat that all hollow. Take the Mississippi with the Missouri water in it and it 's three thousand miles from the top end to the Gulf. Well, the Missouri, from its head to the Gulf, is more than FOUR thousand miles, and muddy all the way. Why, the Missouri beats the blame Mississippi and the Missouri put TOGETHER."

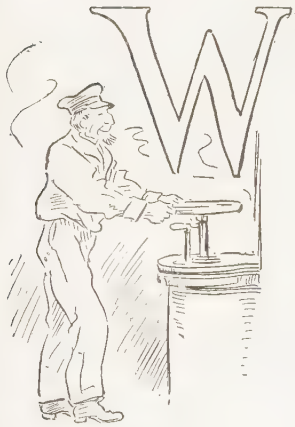
"I see what you mean," he says, and he drew in his horns.

"You bet," I says. "I know all about it because Preston told me so. By rights it ain't the Mississippi so much below St. Louis; it 's the Missouri. Going by the muddy water it 's the Mississippi that empties into the Missouri—and the Missouri don't get no wider or notice it so much either. Why the Missouri won't ASSOCIATE with the Mississippi. You take it all along after it empties in; there 's muddy water all down one side and clear water down the other—and a line drawn where the Missouri won't have nothing to do with it. Why, the Missouri will travel all over the land here and mix up with dirt and be mud; but blamed if it will mix with Mississippi WATER. But of course after a while it gets used to it and mixes up. It makes it all muddy and is satisfied."

Aunt Jemima was sitting up yet, because it was a nice summer night and it was the Fourth; she brought her chair out and sat at the side of the pantry and kept saying: "Deedy, yes, chile" to all that I said to him. So I guess he found out I knew what I was talking about. Anyways he give up.

CHAPTER X

THE SPEED HAS A RUN FOR HER BACON



WELL, I got so busy and was so interested hearing myself talk to him that I never noticed nothing till we was past them bluffs and made a turn; and then the singing all shut up and things was quiet except just the engines. And when I noticed it and looked up there was the Muscoutah not two hundred yards away and just a little ahead of us. We had caught up while she was fooling at a landing, and when she come out we was plum' onto her.

All our niggers quit singing and come out onto the port hogway and stood in line looking over at her. Her niggers kept leaking out onto the side towards us and kept looking over our way. I seen their captain come out on top of the cabin just like he was taking a walk that evening; then he stopped by the bell up in front and leaned over and asked some questions to them down at the boilers.

We was crawling up even with them, slow and sure. They were going pretty good. But when we had got about nose and nose with them we did n't seem to be getting ahead. We was just standing

"We was plum' onto her"

still. We could n't a-stood no stiller if we was stuck in the current under the St. Charles' bridge and could n't hardly pull out. We was just a hundred yards or so from them now—and we ought to a-been closer to get the current right because the channel was n't very wide there—and we was going along even like a team of horses.

But we was n't going to hurry up and do any trying just to beat that boat. This was n't no race; what 's the sense in that? We just saluted each other with the whistles—all boats is polite that way—but our captain and theirs did n't take no particular notice of anything. Only we was n't going to let them beat us or start to showing us anything, you bet. Who would? They could n't keep up to us anyway if we ever tried; I heard the Captain say so more than once. We was a faster boat.

Their niggers was all looking over at ours, and ours was all looking over at theirs and kind of buzzing together like bees and sometimes saying things back to each other. They was firing up pretty busy. You could see them black firemen in front of the fire-box doors throwing the cord-wood in. We did n't seem to get ahead at all; I guess they had the best of the water. They had first choice. I would a-liked to a-gone over and shoved them out if it was n't for the regulations. It was kind of narrow channel there; but I guess we had nearly just as good current.

Our captain went forward on top and looked down and asked if we was making just as much steam as usual. They said we was n't making quite as much as we ought to. But pretty soon it began to sputter and fizz up in front—the safety-valve leaking out the steam like it always does just when you are beginning to get enough of it on. That Muscoutah had been hunching up on us; but not much. She got a few feet ahead. And she kept

hunching up. Then our niggers got to hollering over more; and their niggers hollered back like they had already done it; and then it got all excitement among our niggers. But pretty soon we commenced to come up—slow and steady—just by inches—we was getting up some steam. Then we kind of come to a stop till you could n't notice it. We was throwing in some cord-wood too, to kind of give her a boost. Them boats went along kind of like scales that ain't decided yet which end is the heaviest. We stood and watched every inch and did n't say a word.

You could n't see no sign then which was going to hunch up next. Our niggers all got plum' quiet and stood still like they was holding their breath. They just made eyes across at each other. Their captain stood up in front and did n't seem to notice we was there. Our captain walked from side to side a little over the boilers like he was enjoying the weather. They had n't paid no attention to each other's niggers. There was just the engines a-blowing away and the wash of our wheels meeting away behind, with the waves jumping up at each other and slopping over and fighting it out.

I stood and watched close. It looked sometimes as if they was taking an inch or two ahead. We did n't seem to be moving. The engines was just blowing and working for nothing. But I looked past their stacks up at a bluff and the scenery was sailing along pretty good. The Professor walked restless up and down; I guess he was worried. Aunt Jemima was standing right at the edge of the deck talking to herself.

"'I has it right heah'"

Then there come the big black fireman hurrying back with their water bucket and he dipped it full in the barrel and called Aunt Jemima.

"Good-evenin', Aunt Jemima," he says (niggers is awful polite). "Did you take away de flat-i'on? We ain't seed it sence we was at de St. Chawles' bridge."

"I done took it away fo' to i'on de boy's shirt. He got it all dirty. I hain't used it yet. Does yo' want it again?"

"Yes 'm—we needs it now."

"I has it right heah; but doan' let de steam dry on it when you is froo ef yo' kin help it. 'Kase it make it all rusty on de bottom; an' I has to rub an' scour it wif de ashes."

So she gave it to him; and he went away with the bucket and the iron.

Then I stood and watched close. It seemed like she was going ahead some; but maybe I only thought she did. That Muscoutah was doing her dirty best. The fizzing and rumbling stopped up in the front of the Speed and I thinks to myself, "That 's good; now we 'll wait a little and see." The Professor he turned of a sudden and went on top of the cabin and stood at the bottom of the pilot-house steps. He looked like he was all ready to run up them. Some people is that way. Them exhaust-pipes began to breathe deep and loud—I guess the farmers along there all knew the Speed was snoring louder than usual that night. We began to go ahead a little. We began to move along the Muscoutah slow, like a clock. We

hunched up steady. Then we hunched up a little faster. The engineer stuck his head out of the door and took a look and jerked it in and got busy down there; and then the exhaust-pipes threw some water about five feet into the air and got her throat clear and started to blow for keeps. Pretty soon we

"Shoving in the cord-wood"

was a few feet ahead; then we was a quarter ahead. We kept a-going steady—sometimes I thought we was n't a-doing it; but we was—and then we was pretty near half ahead. And still a-hunching up.

The Muscoutah was a-trailing out the sparks

"A-coaxing the boat along"

lively; we was a-putting in the cord-wood and sparking just the same. Their niggers was shoving in the cord-wood and slamming the doors after every swallow of it so the air would n't come in over the fire but would give them every breath of it from below. I stood and held my breath and PRETTY NEAR said my prayers. I guess them niggers all was doing it too; they was dead quiet.

Blame if we did n't seem to be stopping. That Muscoutah pretty near took a tuck in us—at least it looked like it. But pshaw! we just getting to the point; we started to move steady; pretty soon we was half ahead—and we kept ON a-moving. We was crawling away. "Good for you, Aunt Jemima," I says. "Good for you, the old flat-iron is the stuff; she 's got 'em beat; we 're a-going to do it." And just as we were beginning to show them our stern and it looked like we would pull out for keeps, them niggers of ours started up again and all that was canned up in them tore loose; and their niggers hollered back, trying to yell them down:

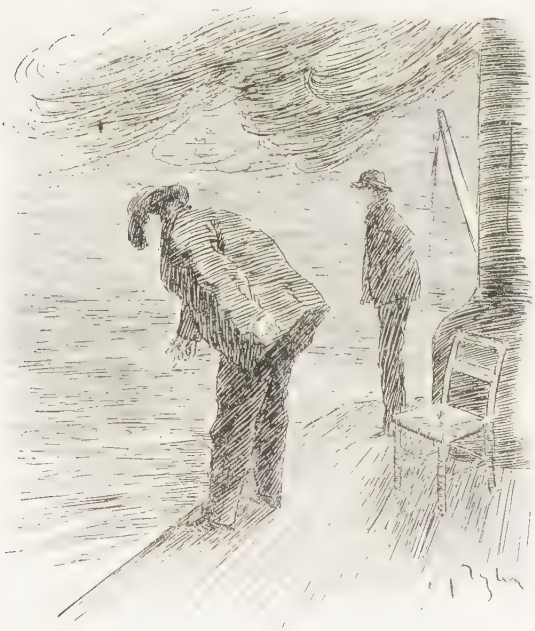
"Go 'long, you Speed! Go 'long, you Speed! Come along now! come along now!" And some was standing up hollering; and some was stooped over watching her close with their hands on their knees; and some snapping their fingers and trying to bring the luck like they was rolling dice; and all their niggers the same—a-coaxing the boat along till it was like forty-five crap games rolled into one—and them a-hollerin' "Yo' KAINT do it! Yo' KAINT do it! Come 'long, you Muscoutah!

Come 'long, you Muscoutah!'' It was n't nothing but noise and excitement and smoke and sparks, like a lunatic asylum on fire, with their niggers a-shoving in the cord-wood and our niggers a-shoving in the cord-wood and the sparks a-flying behind and the red light of the fire-boxes shooting out over the bows; with the furnaces a-snapping their jaws and showing their red throats like bulldogs a-pulling to get at each other.

Their Captain was walking up and down kind of unsettled and ours was standing still looking down at the edge of the cabin where the boilers was. We pulled out till we showed them our stern good and clean; and still we kept a-moving.

And blame if we did n't stop going and that Muscoutah begun to keep up; and she stuck to us like a burr to an old cow's tail. We had n't beat her yet; she was a-getting up the steam for sure. Then their niggers started up all of a sudden again like they seen help a-coming: ''Come 'long now! Yah! Yah! Yah! Yo' KAINT do it! Come 'long, you Muscoutah!'' And then our niggers all got good and excited and went to work; and I stood holding my breath again and watching her close—but she was n't gaining much—you could n't tell whether she was really a-going to come at all if they *did* have the valve fixed—it was n't as good as our flat-iron, I bet—and it was noise and excitement till their captain was just swallowed up in it and ours was a-beginning to move back and forth.

Then he leaned out and looked down at the



"'Sho-o-ove it in!'".

boilers and says, "Put it to her, Griswold! Pull out of here! SHO-O-OVE IT IN!"

Then I heard Griswold—like one bark of a terrier dog. And the engineer he stuck his face out and pulled it in again; and in a little while you could just see the Speed spit on her hands and tighten up her belt. She just laid down to it and shoved her wash back against the bows of the Mus-

coutah like she was pushing her to the foot of the class. And we moved off till we was two lengths and three lengths and four lengths away and going easy. And the crossing was coming.

I looked up at the pilot-house, which was like the Speed—had her neck stretched away up in the air to see where she was going—and Preston just standing there alone doing some thinking. He put her into the crossing where we had the best of the water there was a-going, and we kept right on. When we was six or seven more lengths ahead I heard their valve let loose, which I says to myself, "They have lost their nerve and are getting discouraged." Then we walked away from them. We got to the bluffs and turned in close and started to run. You ought to a-seen them fade.

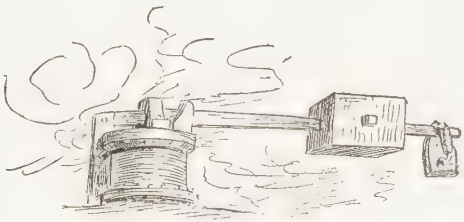
The Professor come down from above and thought a minute like he was making up his mind; and then he went forward to the boilers. Pretty soon he come back and climbed up on the engineer-house and wiped off sweat.

"One hundred and SIXTY-FIVE pounds," he says. "And only a hundred and forty down on the license."

Some people is that way. But we don't carry passengers much, except they take a notion to come.

Pretty soon the Muscoutah was away behind, too far to play with our sparks; she was still coming over the crossing and coming too slow to bother about any more—and the niggers give her one more yell. I turned a flip-flap on deck and bumped my head some—I had n't learned it all yet—and then

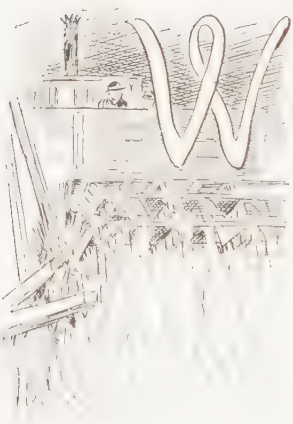
I stood on my hands against the pantry and thinks to myself. "They 'd better take a look at us now because they won't see us for a while." Then our valve tore loose and the exhaust-pipes changed their tune and the Professor just sat down sudden on the trestle and said it was a fine race and wiped the sweat off his face nice and dry. But that was n't no race; that was just a brush: it just happened that we passed them. Why, if the Musconutah wanted to really *race* us she would n't be nowhere; she could n't hold a candle to us. Because the Speed is the swiftest boat on the Missouri and always was.



The safety valve

CHAPTER XI

SAM TALKS HIMSELF TO SLEEP



WHEN we had got to swinging along regular again the Professor started talking to me some more. He said a farmer that come up on the boat before told him that the Speed was as dangerous as a threshing-machine — and they are mighty dangerous. And he said sometimes she would get mixed up in her own works and run herself right through.

"I bet if she turned loose now," I says, "with the cargo we have got on, there would be a lot of winter wheat come up along the shore where we blowed up."

"I guess so," he says.

"I bet if somebody has got an old vacant piece of land with nothing on it and them not expecting anything on it, and they was to come along and find a nice big crop of wheat there all ready to

reap they would n't be sorry we blowed up, would they?''

''Maybe not,'' he says.

''And we would be the chaff,'' I says.

He did n't say nothing.

''I 'm glad,'' I says, ''that we pulled away from that Muscoutah. They might 'a' kept putting up the steam too high; you can't tell what might happen on that blame boat. If she went up right next to us I bet it would be bad on us; don't you think so?'' He said he guessed so. And he did n't say any more. He just seemed to want to have me talk to him.

''Because,'' I says, ''them other boats can't do what we can. Look at the sister of the Muscoutah. She was running up and down here with her boilers used to drinking the muddy water all the time, so that she did n't know anything else. Then one day they turned up one of them rivers that looks clear and just like plain water but has stuff in it; and it did n't set right on her stomach. Her boilers foamed—and when they get to foaming that way you want to watch out if you know it. Biff!—and that was all. They had to get a new boat. She pretty near blowed off the mouth of the Osage. But they got her engines up because they used them to build the Lily of the Valley—and the capstan and such things that went down with the Montana, and a shaft off the Hawkeye, which was a good one and just suited. If you 'd keep collecting together that way you could get a new boat awful cheap—all but the woodwork. You 'd have to furnish

your own woodwork. Because that is spoiled when she burns up or blows to pieces. And if she strikes a snag and goes down where it 's deep it don't hurt the wood much; but it ain't worth while then. If I could dive like Clancy I would go up and down the river and get a lot of stuff. But we don't do none of them things. We have n't sunk but a few times—and last time it was only deep enough to put out the fires."

"A few times!" he says. "How often do you sink?"

"It all depends," I says. "You can't tell. Sometimes you 'd run right through a summer and not sink at all. Maybe you 'd go down once in a couple of summers. It 's just when a snag catches up right or maybe a good sawyer that the gover'-ment snag-boat did n't get. They ain't no good but to keep their old scow painted white, anyhow; we strike more snags than they do, I guess. And them looking for them. I bet we would a-done something this morning if that old tree had been pointing in the other direction. She was one of them accommodating sawyers that stoops down when you 're going up-stream. And then when you 're coming down lickety-pelt it 's laying for you right. But lots points the other way—most of them. They 've got you going and coming."

"What is the safest place on a boat?" he says.

Just then we were passing where the pilot-house of the Benton was looking up out of the dark water, with the current running through its windows,—which were all put out—and swishing lively through where the wheel used to be.

"That 's maybe the safest place," I says, pointing it out to him. "It 's nicer up in the pilot-house anyways. That 's where you can sit on the leather seat comfortable and hear stories; it 's cheerfuller in the pilot-house.

"The pilot-house of the Benton"

"And you 'll mostly notice that when she just sinks that way the pilot-house manages to keep its head out of water. Then maybe you can climb up and get on top of it. But the trouble is you can't tell whether she is going to go up or down. That would n't a-been any good place when we blew out our manhole."

"How was that?" he says.

"Just blew it out," I says. "It sent some of them lively into the river but did n't hurt nothing much. It was the right-hand boiler that let go."

"And did you get ashore with the other boiler?" he says.

"Other boiler!" I seen he did n't know nothing. "Why, them boilers is connected up like Siamese twins and what 's one 's the other's. She just let go and ripped the manhole right out around the edge and threw her whole insides up into the air like a geyser; and that quick the engines and wheel stopped—it was like dropping dead—and we started floating right back down the current, like an old house, in a white fog so thick you could n't see nothing. But after a while it kind of cleared up and the channel took us down where it run near shore and we got off and give her a turn round a tree. Most boats can't do what we can, though. There was the Montana, that was pretty near pulling out of the current under the St. Charles' bridge and she stuck to a plum' standstill and the rudders would n't work—"

"Rudders!" he says. "You mean rudder."

"How could a boat run with one rudder?" I says. "Ain't you got to have one on each corner behind? and sometimes a couple in between. 'Spose a snag busted one or two?"

Blame if he did n't go and look before he would believe THAT. You 'd 'a' thought he was educated, to look at him. It made me wonder whether he believed anything I said.

"Well," I says, "the Montana was trying to pull out but she did n't hang nothing on the safety-valve—"

"Safety-valve, you say?" he says.

"Of course," I says. "If you was pretty near stuck, like we was this spring, and was a-going to go back and strike on them sharp piers if you did n't get to moving, and then if you put that flat-iron on the lever and it pulled you out all hunkydory, would n't you call that SAFETY. What else would you call it?" He did n't say nothing. "This boat can do anything," I says. "But the Montana was afraid to put enough steam on and went down when it was too late. That 's what comes from being a fraidycat."

Well, he got up and went away. I was sorry, because I liked to talk to him after I got started. But he never come back to listen to me no more. I got to thinking maybe I said something he did n't like; but I don't see what.

The Captain had gone and turned in. I looked up on top and blame if Valdes was n't up there again looking down at Griswold like he was on watch. He had been up there two or three times that way and did n't seem to be interested in the race even. Pretty soon he turned around and went down into the cabin. I give him up.

Rags he was hunched up to me and sitting on one of my feet like he always does; and the sky was sprinkled with stars. The moon had gone over to the other side of the river—or else we had come round a bend. I don't know which—and she

"I give him up"

was n't making much time now because there was n't any bluffs.

We was just coming down the middle of the river where she was spread out wide.

Some of the niggers had shut up and snoozed off on the wheat sacks, but the best of them was singing yet; so I sat and listened about "when de ark was finished jes' according to de plan, Massa Noah took his family both animal and man," and a lot that I can't remember. There 's enough of them verses to last a long time; but you 've got to put between every part of it how she is movering and movering along. Or you would n't have the engines working regular and the ark would n't be running right. I never heard them get started up and sing so good as they did on that Fourth of July Eve.

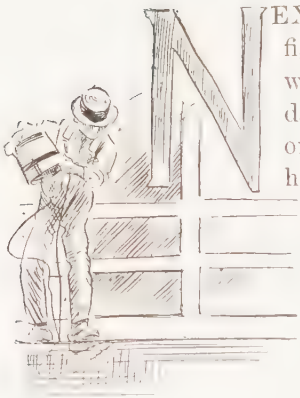
Well, I thinks to myself, the Captain has turned in, so I guess I better turn in too; there did n't seem no chances for anything to happen. I put Rags on a wheat sack by the pantry—which I guess is the safest place from both ends—and then I got Preston fresh water and went and laid down in Number One. And when I laid there a while and felt my bunk a-trembling it kind of shook down my feelings comfortable and I got to going with the engines till I could n't think of nothing but that song:

De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin', a-moverin',
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along
De ole ark a-moverin', a-moverin' along—

And I guess that was about all I remembered of it.

CHAPTER XII

THE BUCKET TAKES A HAND



NEXT morning I woke up. I figured up and found it was the day after Saturday and when I looked out of the little window at the head of my bunk I could see that the day had its Sunday clothes on. I put on my pants, which I had took off that night, and went out and got busy.

The niggers was all feeling fine. They was going to have their Fourth of July when other people had theirs ate up; and they was going to have young pig when the rest of folks was only having common stuff. That is what makes you feel good. Preston came down from the pilot-house and went up to the old bar in the cabin —which was n't used any more except to keep old ropes and boxes and such truck behind—and he fished out the jug of brandy. He took a drink to rest up on, instead of breakfast, and he went and

rolled into his bunk. And Lang was at the wheel again.

We were away down in the Gasconades now, which showed we had come along a-whooping; and we made a landing in a jiffy. You can make a fine landing against straight-up-and-down, cut-off clay where the main channel has come over to shore and started to eat; it is like a soft wharf right at deep water where you can rub up alongside and put on the brakes—specially if you have a stern-wheeler with no paddle-boxes a-sticking out. You just shut off and lose headway and then rub shoulders with the clay and stop just as if you was putting on the brakes at the right spot; and I bet they can make a better landing on the Missouri than anywheres else. A down-stream landing is the same except that you have to turn around and come up to it; but that ain't nothing. The Speed made that next landing like a bird that wheels to stop itself against the air and comes into its nest the back way.

I told the Professor it was the best yet and he better take notice of them things; and then he up and says maybe I was boasting again. He said they was maybe as good down on the Mississippi.

"Blowing, nothing," I says. "Look at a Mississippi side-wheeler trying to get her nose in right. Two wheels and two shafts. Look at her!" I says. "Dingle-dangle down in the engine-room to shut off steam—dingle-dangle to change the valve-rods to the other end of the rockers and get ready to back—dingle-dangle to let him know that if he is

ready now he had better do it—dingle-dangle to bring her forward this side and dingle-dangle to bring her forward on that and dingle-dangle to let up on the whole business and see how she is—Pshaw!" I says. "Do we fool around like one of them boats that has their shafts parted in the middle? Do you see us do that? Lang just rings the door-bell to let Smith know that a town is coming. So he stops work and lets her come. But of course you have got to have the right kind of a river and the right kind of a boat and the right kind of people; I am talking about the SPEED."

Well, he give in. He said maybe I was right. I could get the best of him no matter if he was somebody. I seen his name in print and it had initials on both ends; it was a side-wheeler—I guess it did n't belong up on the Missouri.

We got away from that landing in a jiffy; Fourth of July was started up right and it looked like it was going to turn out pretty fair. I had pretty near forgot about Valdes and Griswold. It looked to me like they was both afraid of each other and nothing was going to come of it. But just as I had cleaned up after breakfast and was thinking that way, things got ready to happen. Which is what you might expect.

It all come out through me just doing my work. You see, I used to do the hardest and dangerousest thing on that boat. I used to fill the water-barrel. That 's hard to teach some people; but I guess most anybody can understand it that has brains and thinks. First place, when you 've got a bucket

on a rope and want to catch up water on a steamboat that is running, you want to do it right. You don't want it to strike bottom side up or it will be full of air and won't fill till it starts to drag; you don't want it to strike flat on its side or it won't fill fast enough; and you don't want it to strike on its bottom or it won't fill at all. Any of them ways is likely to be the end of you; they will catch the water of a sudden at the end of the rope and give you a jerk. You 've got to stand with your toes right at the edge of the boat or you could n't h'ist the bucket right; and there ain't any railing around the edge, so you don't want to get no jerk. You could n't hang onto no bucket anyway if it started to drag twelve miles an hour. What you want to do is to throw it so that it strikes on its lip and goes right in and takes a quick swallow; then you give the rope a jerk which turns it over and fills it; and that same jerk pulls it out and you have got a bucketful ready to haul up. You do it all at once that way, just so. Second place, you kind of throw the bucket ahead on account of the boat going so fast. And you have the right length of rope to give it the jerk at the right time just as it goes in; if you ain't got it jerked out full before it has passed it will drag; and before you have got time to remember that there ain't no use hanging onto the rope it will give you a jerk and over you go. Then the wheel has got you. It ain't nothing to fill a water-barrel when you know how, though.

The Captain and the steward used to give me

warning about it and say maybe I ought n't to do it; but, pshaw! I could do it. That bucket never jerked me over. I practised every time I got a chance. When I had the barrel filled I would take up more and pour it back in the river when nobody was looking; and that way I got good. I tackled her when the boat was running slow and kind of worked up. I had n't never tried it when we was whooping along like we was to-day; but I knew I could do it. The barrel looked like it would maybe stand a couple of bucketfuls, so I went at it and got one up, kerslap. I did n't throw it quite far enough ahead; but I jerked quick and got it out all right. I knew all the time that I could do it.

Well, when I had gone and put that in the barrel and come for another, Griswold seen how I done it and he come down the hogways. He had been bossing things up in front and I guess he felt mean and measly about losing sleep—and maybe thinking about something; so he sails into me and starts yapping about how I threw in that bucket.

"That 's no way to do that," he says; and while he was complaining and saying I would lose the bucket I stood with the bucket in my hands and did n't dast to talk back.

Just then Valdes stepped into sight out of the passageway between the pantry and kitchen. There was n't anybody else around and we was all alone—I seen to that before I started to practise. He come right out on the engine-house deck like a man would step onto a theater stage—just when the time had come.

"Griswold," he says, "if you can do it and the boy can't—DO IT," and he pointed down with his arm and forefinger just as he snapped it out.

I guess that took Griswold pretty much by surprise; and he did n't have time to think—He gave a look at Valdes and grabbed the bucket

"The bucket bobbing up and down on the waves"

out of my hands and slapped the bucket straight down into the water. And the next thing I knew Griswold was jerked over and left behind. For just about a flash I seen him passing away with just his arm out of the water. His arm was waving like he was trying to get it free of the rope, and catch something. I give a yell and jumped up on the engine-house and ran astern where I could look out past the big wheel and see back of the boat. And Valdes after me.

There was n't nothing behind but the bucket

bobbing up and down on the waves like it was dancing with gladness.

Well, when I give the holler, the Captain and the clerk and everybody come running aft to see what had happened. I pointed to the bucket behind and said it was Griswold that went; and they asked me a lot of foolish questions about what happened while you could snap your finger. And there was n't nothing to it except that he was showing me how to catch up water and got caught.

The Speed circled round and stood up-stream with just enough steam to hold her against the current, with the wheel going round kind of lazy and us not moving; the river just flowed past us like we was an island. They sent two niggers out in a skiff and they rowed around and kept looking the water over here and there. After a while the bucket come down on the current and caught up to us—for you see we had left it behind coming down-stream. It passed near where I was standing and danced up and down in the waves again and passed on. That bucket was n't going to stop for nothing like that, even if the boat did; it was bound for St. Louis. Well, anybody could a-seen in three or four minutes that it was n't any use to look for him any more. But we fooled round long enough to be decent about it. Then everybody looked solemn; and the Captain said he guessed we had lost track of him; and then we turned and went on. After a while we caught up to the bucket; it was going along by itself the same as ever. When we passed it I went to

the wheel and looked back; and this time when it struck our wash it danced up and down higher than ever and wagged its rope at me like it was making motions about what it had done.

For a while it was kind of quiet and lonesome all over the boat. But the Speed was hitting it up the same as usual. The engine was working regular; and you could feel that them things did n't bother engines none. And that helped considerable to pass it off. The niggers in the hold was talking and bragging about how bad he was and how he would shoot if you jumped him; and the nigger that had worked under him the longest boasted the most important. They was all proud that they had worked for a mate that was such a bad man. They praised him up a lot that way; and then dinner-time come and I rang the bell and they all sailed in. And when we had been going 'long regular for a couple of hours, with everybody tending to their work and the boat getting farther away from the place, it seemed like Griswold had been dead a long time. The Captain took one of the niggers and put him to drive in Griswold's place till we got to St. Louis. He was that tall yellow lazy nigger that Griswold had been hitting on the shins; and blame if he did n't sail in and drive them worse than Griswold. I bet he made up the half an hour we lost. I kept thinking about Griswold being dead; but most everybody else was busy working. Only Valdes sat with his head on his hand looking solemn, like he was the only one that was real sorry about it.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VICTORY OF RED, WHITE AND BLUE

AWHILE after dinner we blew for Madison City. And then when that white shirt came out I could n't say nothing. I went and made up my mind and put it on. The niggers in that town had on their Sunday clothes; and the crowd of girls showed more posy colors than a flower garden on the bank. It was an awful sweet-smelling town on account of the kind of shade trees they had; and the perfume of it would spread right out on the waters of a summer afternoon. Lang always said he could shut his eyes and make a landing there; he could pilot by smell if every place was like that. I guess the niggers there picked out the shade trees on account of the perfume instead of the shade—a nigger don't care much for shade nohow—and it was a kind of a barber-shop, cake-bakery smell all over town.

I always liked it pretty well. But to-day the

perfume of it smelled to me like a funeral. It 's funny how the same smell can smell different ways. And with me standing out in that stiff shirt all dressed and uncomfortable, it was mighty solemn to smell. I never liked it no more after that.

While I was standing out and Aunt Jemima was sitting in her best apron with her hands folded and thinking secret to herself how fine I looked to everybody, that Professor come out all dressed up and leaned plum' up against her kitchen like he was part of the show too. When Aunt Jemima seen that she straightened up and looked primmer than ever and begun talking to herself, like she was praying: "Lawdy, I do hopes dat man stay right da—jes' like dat—jes' like dat." He helped to make a fine show for her part of the boat.

And when Valdes come—looking handsomer yet—it most took her breath away. But he was coming to see me before he got off. He called me a little aside and told me how he was going to get off to satisfy himself whether there was any trace of his wife to be found there. And he said he would see me again. He shook hands and said how much obliged he was for what I had done for him; and I told him not to mention it because I had n't done nothing worth ten dollars; and then he shook hands and went.

Well, I was tired standing stiff in that place, so I went up on top of the cabin. And what did I see but Blue and Red standing together at the edge of the crowd, and whispering together friendly like they was making up their mind together. The

"The niggers . . had on their Sunday clothes"

Captain seen them and kind of smiled; and then he called to the pilot: "Look at that, will you? There 's them two that we put on the island. They 've BEAT US BACK." Then Lang he chuckled. I guess maybe it was kind of funny when you looked at it all over. When they had whispered some more and made eyes at that nigger that was in Griswold's place they come marching down abreast like soldiers that was going to back each other up and started to talk to him. The Captain hollered down to take them back if that was what they wanted; so the tall nigger looked ugly at them and started right in to boss them. "Go an' git dem bar'ls. An' doan' yo' git to ac'in' up on dis boat no mo'. Kase I won't HAB it. Git a-movin'!"

Soon as we was away from that place I got myself out of that shirt. Then I went down in the hold to loosen up and get to feeling natural again. That Blue and Red was sitting with all the rest around them, a-telling all the things they did. Red's jaw was all swelled up like he had the toothache; so Blue was doing the talking. Red was smiling and backing him up. And here is what they done on that island.

After the boat was out of sight Red turned and went away from Blue. And when he was a little distance away he turned and said "You jes' wait. I 's gwine fix you."

"Yes, you is. Look a' heah—doan you come instigatin' roun' me, boy. Doan' you come prospeckin' roun' my en' ob dis heah island."

Red went and sat down in the willows away at the other end; and Blue stood on the edge of his end holding hands with a bush and thinking things over. I guess they was both so big and strong that neither of them liked to start in on the other. After a while it got mighty tiresome—a nigger gets lonesome easy anyhow. Blue made up his mind he would swim off alone; but Red could n't swim, and Blue wanted to see what he was doing. He scrouched along through the willows till he come clean out to the sand-bar at the other end and there was Red sitting under a bush.

"Who 's YOU lookin' at?" says Red.

"I 's a-lookin' at you; dat who I 's a-lookin' at. How 's you gwine to git off dis heah island?"

"How YOU gwine git off dis heah island?"

"I 's a-gwine swim off. Dat how I 's a-gwine git off."

At that Red jumped right up on his feet ready to fight.

"Look a' heah, Blue; doan' you go talkin' like dat to me. Doan' you do it. You s'pose I 's a-gwine leabe you go off an' me stay heah alone when de sun is down. If you say dat no mo' I 's gwine fight. I 's gwine FIGHT."

Well they bullyragged each other a while till I guess they forgot what it was all about; they just kept talking and keeping each other company. Then Blue, who was a good swimmer, he says:

"I could swim off wif you, too, ef yo' had sense. Does you s'pose you has got enough sense fo' to float?"

"How you do dat floatin'?"

"You jes' b'lives you kin. Den you float. De reason you kain't float is jes' 'kase you doan' b'lieve."

"Do dat b'lievin' keep you up? How dat gwine make you float?"

"It don't. You floats anyways. But ef you DISbelieve, den you sink down."

"Ain' I tried it? An' I go down. Mah feet dey stahts to sink; and dey pull mah haid down."

"Dat jes' it—dat jes' it. It jes' when you is sinkin' dat you wants to do de b'lievin' dat you ain't. Jes' when you is sinkin' you wants to b'lieve dat you is floatin'. Den you keep on an' you float."

Well, Red could n't see how that was going to keep him up when he was going down; but he said he would try it, and if it worked maybe he could believe it. Blue took him around into a patch of easy water and showed him how he could hold him up on one hand when he laid still with just his face out. Then he held him on one finger; and after a while he took his finger away slow to see if Red would keep on b'lieving. Red started to go down slow at one end; and when he felt that he scrambled and got up with his mouth full of water.

"See, Blue; dat b'lievin' ain't enough fo' to make me float. But it do work SOME."

"'Course it do. You has a big chest; you kin float. Only you doan' b'lieve enough."

"It keep mah haid up. In mah haid wha I do de b'lievin' it work; it keep dat en' up all right. I wisht I could do some b'lievin' in mah *feet.*"

"Doan' you mind dem feet. Dem feet ain' none

ob your business. Ef you kain't b'lieve, maybe you is de kind dat would do bettah ef you jes' doan' GIVE A CENT. Doan' give a cent what happen. Dat work jes' as well. Ef you staht to go down jes' go down. Go down an' drown—an' keep ON a-drownin'. Den you woan' do it. You float."

"Maybe I kin do dat bettah—it seem to come mo' nache'l. But befo' we stahts dis heah b'lievin' an' dis heah doan'-carin', I wants to tell you secret dat I *do* care."

"Well, you try it good. Trouble is you doan' try it to de en', an' keep on a-doin' it."

"Well, I 's a-gwine give it a good chanst. But doan' YOU git to thinkin' no sech foolishness. You jes' keep in mind dat I ain't *a-tryin'* fo' to drown."

Well, Red he tried it and he said it did n't work; but he got so good that he could float if Blue just kept his hand under him a little. He was getting used to it and saw there was something in it. Then Blue swum around with him a while near the island.

"Look a' heah, Red: I could git you to de land now ef you jes' leave it to me. You doan' hab to do none of dat sho' nuff b'lievin'. All you has to do is to b'lieve in me. Jes' b'lieve dat I won't let you go down—no mattah ef it git to lookin' dat way to you. Do you spec' yo' kin b'lieve dat?"

"Sho'; doan' I see you kin hold me up? I kin float ef you is touchin' me—I kin float anywhah."

"Den we gwine staht. Lay down an' staht b'lievin' in me. Doan' take you min' off'n it;

doan' git to thinkin' fo' youse'f. Kase ef you do, down you go. You has got to trus' me lak a li'l chile—JES' lak a li'l chile."

Well, Blue took hold of him and started out; and blame if Red did n't believe in him all the way over till they got nearly to the bank. The

"'Jes' lak a li'l chile'"

bank they come to was straight up and down and almost ready to cave in with the water slopping under it. It was deep channel water right up to shore and no way to get up that bank at all. Blue turned with him and kept swimming down river.

Red laid on his back looking up; and when he turned his eyes and seen that shore he lost his grip on his believer and then he made a scramble for

land. When he done that and did n't find no bottom under his feet he made a grab for Blue; and both of them went down. And then them two was having a rassling match and fighting it out down at the bottom of the river. When they come bobbing up to daylight, Blue had his fist ready and he hauled off and let Red have it on the jaw just where he knew his weak spot was. That settled Red; he did n't bother Blue no more. Blue was pretty near played out towing him along and trying to hold his face high out of water; but now he did n't try to hold his face out at all. He just took Red along anyway and swum every way and blowed the water up before him trying to get wind and rest himself. Once he thought he would have to give up, but he hated to lose such a good coon-jiner so he stuck it out. At last he come to a little rain-gulley in the bank where he hauled Red in and got him up on shore. He rolled him on the bank and bumped him up and down till he guessed he had the water out of him; and then he sat down and pumped his arms to see if the life would come up. Pretty soon Red rolled his eyes and sat up and looked around.

"Is dat you, Blue? Wha is we at?"

"We is right here in 'Souri, dat 's wha we is at. An' I jes' had to lambaste you on de jaw or else we would n't be heah. How is you feelin'?"

"I ain't feelin' very good yet."

"How is yo' face a-feelin'?"

"It feel lak de toofache."

"Well, den, I guess you an' me is about even," says Blue.

Red worked his jaw a few times to see how it felt. Then he rolled his eyes around again and said:

"I jes had to lambaste you'"

"Even, you say. EVEN! Lawd! Blue, I guess we is MO' en even."

And that was all them two blame niggers done; they did n't fight at all. They got on a freight-train and beat the Speed back to Madison City. Blue had his head tied up; and Red had his head tied up; and they sit there bragging and backing

each other up and being such friends it made me SICK. I got up and went away from there.

The Speed come along steady the rest of that day. When I went to bed it looked as if everything was done happening and it would just be a case of making time. The white snag-scow that likes to hang round St. Louis considerable did keep the snags pulled out of the mouth of the Missouri anyway. So we could make time that night pretty safe, I guessed.

I woke up with the whistle blowing; and when I looked out of the narrow window at the head of my bunk I seen it was the dusk of morning. I jumped right out of bed and put my hat on and went up on top. There was the St. Louis elevator right in sight; and there was the old Bald Eagle coming along even with us from the upper Mississippi—and she was n't showing us any tricks, if she was a side-wheeler. And there was our captain, with the others around him; and he was talking up to Preston with the watch in his hand. Well, when I heard what they was saying I felt good. I stood on my hands against the smoke-stack right when the Captain was looking: And he did n't say nothing, neither. We had busted the Fourth of July record right up the middle. We had beat it by more than two hours and I would like to see the Muscoutah do that.

CHAPTER XIV

SAM MAKES SOME FINE DISTINCTIONS

YOU never miss nothing till you have n't got it no more. I found that out in St. Louis. And if you ain't going to have it right along it 's maybe better not to get used to it at all. Afterwards you 'll pretty near wish you never knew about it: that 's what I I did.

You see it took us two days to unload and load at St. Louis, and on the second day in the morning, which was Tuesday, I seen Valdes coming down the levee. He come to see me. He had n't found any trace of his wife in Madison City and he would like to talk to me when we had plenty of time. He gave me the card of his hotel and wanted to know if I would n't like to come and have a visit and a comfortable talk with him. I told him I guessed I could. There was n't much to do when we were lying there at St. Louis—no pilot to be tended to and no niggers to feed—so I could mostly

get off a while. He said for me to come by all means; and he went away.

I got my chores done a while before dinner-time and I decided I better go without waiting for anything to eat; I was n't hungry yet, anyways. So I washed my face and kind of smoothed Rags out and we went. Everybody knew where that hotel was, and when we got there I went right into the big hall where everybody was sitting round taking it easy and talking about the prices of cotton and things—planters and people that have n't got anything to do. When I was looking around to see where the clerk's office was I seen Valdes over by a cigar-stand. He shook hands and was glad to see me. I found he had just had dinner and was going to have a smoke. The clerk asked him what kind he would have; and he said he would take Havana and the color of it must be Maduro. He said he liked a heavy cigar right after dinner but he preferred a lighter domestic later in the day. Well, when the clerk handed him the box he pushed it back and said it must be a Londres shape. He said he liked a Londres shape for a good easy-chair smoke after dinner; and no matter what some people's taste might be he liked a panatella for the street. When the clerk got him just the right kind he put down a quarter and did n't get no change. You 'd think it was only a cent—the way he spent it. Then he looked around and said he believed he would take a couple of the small cigars with Manilla wrappers, which was the kind he liked the first thing in the morning. And he

shoved over fifty cents for them and did n't get no change. He just lit up and spoke to me polite and said he hoped I had n't learned to smoke yet; and when I said I had n't practised much he patted me on the shoulder and said to come along with him to his room.

But before we got to the elevator he remembered his socks did n't suit him; and he believed he would get some now. So we stepped out next door to get them. He found some fifty cent socks that suited him pretty fair. But just as the clerk was going to wrap them up he noticed something and said they would n't do. There was a seam down one side; and he said his feet could never stand for seams. He had roughed around and lived all kinds of ways but there must n't be no seams in his socks if he could help it. The clerk found some sixty cent pairs without and they was all right. Well, I picked up them socks that was n't good enough and looked at them. That seam was just a fine little seam; it was n't no bigger than the weaving of some socks I 've seen. Why I 'd worn socks that you could see the pattern of them printed into your feet when you went in swimming; and they 'd be that way when I had been in so long that my hands was puckered.

And I would never a-thought to mind it if I did n't know any different.

He got what he wanted and we went back to the elevator; and then I happened to remember that I was thirsty; and I guessed I had better have a drink of water somewheres before we got up to

his bedroom where there would n't be any. He guessed he would have a drink, too, later in the day; so he called a nigger boy and told him to send us up a bottle of water for twenty-five cents. If I 'd a-known that I would a-taken pop; I never would pay out money for water. But it turned out to be worth it: it was cool and had all the mud taken out of it. I have seen clear water in the Osage and places; but I never seen no clear water that was fit to swallow—unless you wanted the chills and fever. Good drinking water has got to have Missouri mud in it. But this clear water was good and would n't hurt. Rags he hustled right onto the elevator and I said maybe it was n't proper for him to come up. But Valdes he said he guessed it was all right; dogs has got a right to go visiting, anyway; and if it was n't his room he 'd like to know it. The elevator fellow just smiled polite and did n't talk back to him.

His room was something fine. It was finer than the cabin of the Natchez—and I thought that was something special. There was water in it, too; all he had to do was to step into a little room and get it hot or cold, and if he pulled a string it would come like rain. He had that all by himself to stand under and let it wash him.

He took off his coat and hung it on a stretcher and loosened up his vest and sat down in a chair big enough for our captain and gave me another. Then he reached around and rung a bell; and a nigger come quicker than a fire-engine to see what he would have. Valdes said he would take Cognac and soda. He asked me what I would have. Well,

I looked at my bottled water and thought maybe I ought n't to ask for anything more that cost money. But I guessed I would, so I said I would take some brandy. Valdes looked at the nigger and smiled and said, "I guess he means ginger ale." He got a bottle and it cost less than water; but it cost fifteen cents. It was worth it, though. It went right up your nose and tasted good all the way down. I guess that five cent stuff is just a fraud. But I never knew it before.

Well, he stretched out and puffed at his cigar and things got comfortable; leastways it was comfortable for him and Rags. But I was n't real easy yet. There was a big bear-skin rug on the floor and Rags had got into the middle of that and rolled over on his back and rolled his eyes around satisfied; he looked like the bear was an old friend of his. It just suited him. And when he had squirmed around a few times he laid himself out flat with his chin on his paw and looked like he was used to such things before. Rags was a dog that you did n't need to be ashamed to take anywheres. He would act as if the best was not any too good for him; and you 'd think he was used to it all his life. You can't faze a dog with anything like that.

"Well, my boy," says Valdes, "make yourself easy. Drink up your ginger ale; there 's more if you want it. Just make yourself comfortable." Then he went on and talked about what a nice day it was, and did I ever go to school and did I like steamboating and such. And he says, "Make yourself right at home."

But pshaw! I could n't put my feet up and get

used to it all of a sudden like that. It only takes a little piece of your mind to talk about school and such things, anyhow; and the rest of me was worrying about Rags and what he was doing. I was afraid he would give that rug fleas. How would they know it was dead? They would n't know—not till Rags got up and went away. Then it would be too late for them, I bet.

You can't hardly keep fleas off a dog, no matter how hard you try. I rubbed him one day with nearly half of the Captain's bottle of mosquito lotion that he rubs on his face so he can sleep nights at the St. Louis levee. That 's good for mosquitoes but I found you can't fool no fleas with it. Fleas is awful smart. I heard a fellow that was looking at my dog say that you can train fleas to do anything; a flea is as smart as an elephant. There 's men that can train them to do all kinds of circus acts; and when you look at them through a glass the performance is just as good as a big one. And that shows that you can't get the best of them even when they ain't had no lessons; they 're awful smart. I guess it comes from associating with people so much. But Rags did n't care. He lolled around and took it as easy as if the bear was no better than he was.

I kept on drinking ginger ale between times until I was pretty near ready to go up like a balloon. Valdes did n't say what he wanted to see me about or get down to business at all; and I guess he noticed all the time that I was kind of stiff and not right at home. "Make yourself right at home,"

he says. "We 've got the whole afternoon to visit and there is no hurry. I hardly expected you would get here so soon. You must have had early dinner on the boat."

Well, I told him I did n't have no dinner: I was n't hungry when I left, anyhow.

"No dinner!" he says. He got up and buttoned his vest and put on his coat. "Then you 'd better come down to the dining-room and have some dinner," he says. "You can't sit and talk on an empty stomach." Rags got right up, too, but we shut the door and left him behind.

I never ate such a dinner as that; there was a special nigger to wait on me. But I did n't mind that; I know how to boss niggers. It was so big they had to make seven or eight jobs of it and I dirtied ten or twelve plates. Some of it was so good you could n't tell what it was. When I had eat through to the end and found there was more—and it getting better all the time—I was sorry I did n't know it in the first place. But the last was ice-cream, which I took chocolate; and they brought it all made into the shape of a dog that looked something like Rags; but that melted inside of me and went in between all right. Maybe nobody won't believe it, but this is true: I eat up most three dollars worth. If I had that ticket I could prove it. It kind of surprised me; but when Valdes looked at it he was n't mad at all.

When I got up to the room again that dinner kind of held me down solid in the chair like I belonged there; and I was commencing to feel pretty

"Which I took chocolate"

natural. I used to think things was things; but they ain't. There 's a real kind of everything and if you ain't got the money your kind is just a fraud. If you 've got the money there 's more expensive pie and more expensive water and high-priced pop. Who 'd think it that did n't taste it?

You take that mock-apple pie that Aunt Jemima can make. It 's just the bread that 's left, with some sugar and vinegar in it: and when you 've got the crusts on and baked there 's lots of people would take it for apple pie. You would hardly know the difference except it gets mushy in your mouth if you chew too long before you swallow. You 'd think it was all right unless you was real used to ordinary pie. Well, the kind of pie in the hotel made regular ordinary pie seem mocky.

Everything was that way. What most people has is only imitation. But they don't know the difference; they never found out.

Well, after we had talked about how old Rags was, and where did Clancy get him, and what he maybe was besides spaniel, and did I go in swimming much, I begun to see what he wanted of me. He thought if we got to talking about everything and spoke of Clancy once in a while maybe I would let out something I had n't thought to tell. Well, I did n't know nothing more; and when I found that out and that I was getting all these things for nothing it made me feel cheap. After a while I told him I did n't know no more and I guess I better go. But he said that did n't make no difference; he was kind of lonesome and he liked boys, anyway. He said I must sit down and spend the afternoon just for company. And maybe I would think of something.

After a while I got to asking him about himself and what he thought he would do, and where did HE think maybe his wife and little girl was. He

did n't want to talk much. But I kept asking him something every once in a while. Then he sat and looked at me and said "You are a serious-minded boy, ain't you?" And after that he took me more serious. And after he got started to talking about them serious things he went on and got interested in what he was saying himself. He said how nice him and his wife was getting along when he left; and how smart and how good-looking his little girl was; and how big a young lady she would be now. And he wondered would she look like his side of the family the way she did when she was little, and if she got to looking more that way—and maybe like his mother when she was young. And he went on and wondered how glad she would be to see him and have him back; once he forgot to puff his cigar and it pretty near went out. He thought he was talking just to me; but I guess it was mostly for himself.

Then he started in on me and Clancy again. But that was n't no use. I told him the whole thing over again till I came to a stop, thinking maybe that would satisfy him. Well, it did, kind of; but no matter which way our talk went you could see that he was watching to get something out of me about his little girl and his wife.

As long as I was going to stay so long I thinks to myself, I will find out why it was that he did n't jump Griswold. I asked him a good many questions that he would just pass up and tell me that some things would be hard for me to understand. But when I got his mind on it he talked some about it.

The best I could make out was this. You see he hated Griswold but he did n't exactly despise him. He did despise him some ways; but you see the main thing Griswold did was to just care for Valdes' wife the first and then keep on liking her. And Valdes could n't hate him as much as he 'd like to for that; especially when he was feeling sorry himself about losing her. He hated Griswold mostly for fooling him out of some of his money and helping to bring all this on; but at the same time he could n't help thinking he was a fool himself and that things was pretty much his own fault anyway. So you see when he was most ready to pitch into Griswold he would think it over again; and when he looked into what Griswold done he would get to hating himself at the same time. He was going to have it out with Griswold all the time; but his first mad had worked itself off and he kept thinking things over and waiting till the right time come and he saw his way clear. So he would stand up on the cabin and look down at Griswold and think and think.

But instead of getting it all boiled down on his own side he seen one thing plain enough about Griswold. Griswold was despisable and mean enough no matter what Valdes had done; Griswold had it coming to him anyway. So when Valdes stepped out of the passageway that morning he was going to have a settling between them. And before he had got started in it was all over.

It was kind of strange how that happened right then. It was just as if Valdes come and pointed

his finger for Griswold to kill himself and he went and done it. I could see that Valdes kind of looked on me as the one that was mostly the reason for it. And that made me feel pretty cheap. I guess that was why he talked it all out to me when he got started; I was his partners in it. Well, I did kind of feel it was partly me. I could n't help thinking that maybe Griswold was really watching out that I would n't get drowned myself; and I felt kind of bad about him, seeing he was dead. But pshaw! I did n't really have no more to do with it than that bucket did, I guess. Not as much. Anyway you can look at it that way. If he was n't quick-tempered and mean, and maybe thinking what he would have to settle with Valdes, would he 'a' slapped that bucket down that way and got drowned? I bet he would n't. Anyway it was n't ALL my fault. And I did n't go to do it.

I asked Valdes how he felt about it and was he glad he got the best of Griswold that way. "Well," he said, "no, not exactly." He was n't real sorry some ways, either. He said that was the way things went sometimes in this world; and he was n't exactly glad about it, either. But pshaw! what 's the use of me a-trying to tell how he was feeling about everything when he did n't know himself. You could see he did n't know no more than I did; it was too mixed up.

Then he rung the bell again; and the nigger come in a hurry and brought him some more of that French whiskey and soda. He looked pretty worried and he said he was taking it to make him think.

When talk was beginning to run out, I got up and put on my hat and said I guessed we had better go; and Rags got up off the bear-skin to come along.

"Sit down a moment," he says; and he took out a piece of paper and the gold-tipped pencil again. "Now about this Clancy. Is that his first or his second name?"

"I don't know," I says.

"Then you were not very well acquainted with him?"

"I should say I am," I says. "I knew him so well that I never asked him them things. He 's acquainted with lots of people."

"Who with—for instance?"

"Most anybody for instance," I says. "He knows you in three minutes; he 's pretty sociable."

"What 's his complexion?"

"He 's dark complected all over," I says.

"All over?"

"Yes. From going in swimming and being outdoors so much. He says he does n't know whether he is really dark complected or just got tanned when he was young. He never give himself a chanst to bleach out."

"Give me a description of him. What does he look like?" he says.

"Well," I says, "he is kind of stocky built and pretty strong. He has kind of blue eyes and brownish hair. But he can hold his face most anyways even when he is laughing; he is a josher. He kind of swings when he walks; but you can notice

it more when he gets on his good clothes and goes uptown holding his fists shut. Not like a sailor though—just independent."

"Oh!" he says; and he wrote it down. "And has n't he any relatives or a home? Did n't he mention where any of them lived?"

"His old man is dead," I says. "But his mother must be living because he sends money to her. His old man used to lambaste the life out of him for doing things. And Clancy says he ought to a-given it to him harder."

"And don't you know someone who could give me this information? Who does he know?"

"Well—most anybody," I says. "Some way-up folks and some low-down ones. He says folks are pretty much alike—take them in swimming. And he looks at the ones out of water about the same; just as they come. Clancy is all right, though. The girls in the restaurants always puts the biggest piece of meat on his plate."

"What restaurant?"

"Wherever he eats when he is hungry. But none of them could tell you anything about him; they 'd only say he was a good fellow."

"And you say he is a close friend of yours?"

"I should say he is," I says.

"How long have you known him?"

"It 's most two years now," I says. "It 's that long since he went away. And he never come back for Rags since."

Valdes he stopped a while but did n't get anything down. He seemed to be thinking about something.

"What I mean is—how long DID you know him?" he says.

"Oh!" I says. "One day," I says.

He thought a while again.

"And what is his trade? Can't you tell me that?" he says.

"He has n't got a trade, by rights," I says. "That is why he mostly does things that takes a dare. And sometimes it pays just as good. He come pretty near learning to be a boiler-maker; but the boss did n't treat him square—so they did n't get along. Then he was fired and did n't get no chanst. But he learned enough that he got a job riveting on a stand-pipe afterwards; and he liked that better because it was outdoors and up high. And then he got a job on a bridge; which is pretty good because it is around the water. Sometimes he gets a job himself and sometimes he takes one from an ageney—according to what they have. But he won't work on a viaduct, though. He worked once down in a hot valley where it was all sweat and no swim, and he did n't like it—he says all bridges ought to be over water. But what he would like to be—if he could get into it—is a base-ball pitcher. He is good, too. He will play any of them."

After that Valdes did n't ask me much that I knew. So then I put on my hat again and stood up.

"He could be a champeen swimmer," I says,—"if he could get into it. He goes along right under the surface; and all you can see is his arms swinging up—and sometimes his face when he turns his mouth up quick to blow. He swims overhand."

"Then I would n't be likely to see him in the water, would I?" he says, kind of smiling; and he folded up the paper and put it in his pocket. "But don't you think you might see this Clancy again, some time? You might."

"Well," I says, "I could a-met him down in New Orleans last winter. He said he was going to be down there; but I could n't get a chanst in the towboat like I wanted—so I could n't get down on the Mississippi. He likes to have a job in New Orleans in winter—when the races are going and things. Maybe he would be down there next winter."

"I should say he was something of a sport," says Valdes.

"Kind of," I says, "specially baseball, though."

"Well, if you ever see him—if he comes for his dog or anything—don't forget to tell him that I want to see him. There will be five hundred for it—half for him and half for you. I will pay you for finding him and give him the same for finding Mrs. Valdes."

That sounded pretty fine to me.

"And what are you going to do?" I says.

"I 'll probably travel a good deal."

"And how would he ever find you—if he came?"

"Tell him to be where YOU can find him—let him keep in touch with you. I 'll get back to see you in the course of time. I 'll tend to that."

"Well, good-bye," I says.

"Good-bye," he says. "Don't forget what I told you. And if you come across that Clancy tell him I am a—a—a—sport, too."

"I will. I am much obliged and I had a real good time,"—so then he come along and showed me the way to the elevator. But I took the winding stairs; they go round and round.

"I took the winding stairs"

Well, I did n't look in no show windows on the way back to the boat that time. I could see five hundred dollars going ahead of me all the way. Gee, it would a-been easy to make that money if I only knew how.

CHAPTER XV

THE WHEEL TAKES A TURN

THE second trip after that a sawyer near Ninety Mile Rock took us just above the water line. The engineer reversed so hard that it kind of loosened up the bolts in the big casting that mended the shaft of the wheel where it was broke in the middle; and that let the shaft sag a little; and that kind of bound the crank-pins in the boxes; and that give the big driving-beams a twist down to the engines; and that bound the other boxes on the cross-heads; and that bound the cross-heads in the slides and made the engines work hard and stiff in spite of all the oil you could put on;—it was like everything jumped at one little excuse to get out of kilter. The engineer said it was a blame wonder that that accident did n't run up the bell-wire and kill the pilot. Sometimes bad luck is like a bunch of fire-crackers that you only need to light one.

That hole in the bows was just at the edge of the water, so that a little of the river kept running in; but they shifted a lot of wheat sacks to the back of the hold and the boat raised its nose a little so that the water stopped. The engineer he tightened the bolts up the best he could, but he could n't straighten the shaft right; so he loosened up the boxes on the crank-pins some, and loosened up the other boxes on the cross heads some, and opened up the slides some, and he made everything wrong like the rest that was wrong till it was all kind of right —and then we could go along down stream slow. He could keep enough power on to make the rudders work, anyway. We had to run even slower than we could so that the water would n't rise at the bow and run into the hole again while the carpenter was nailing something on it. We got into St. Louis running lame but all right; and then we laid over for repairs.

While I was n't doing anything I got kind of monotonous; so I says to myself, I guess I will just take another trip on the Muscoutah—they all know me now—and maybe I will stop off at Aunt Liddy's. And I bet you ten dollars I will find out some more of that story. So I done it.

Aunt Liddy was glad to have me come visiting; 'specially because I told her all how Griswold was dead and everything. But I did n't find out much.

"Lawdy," she says, "I never see a mo' scrumptious-lookin' quality man den Mistah Valdes de time he come 'long to Madison City wid his black moustaches. An' all de white gals takin' notice of

him; an' ever'body wondering what his kind pokin' round in de bluffs fo'. An' how de Colonel git mad an' r'ar up when he see dat him an' his Effie has made up togethah. He call him dat Latin man; an' he sw'ar hisse'f red in de face. He send her away to de convent. An' when Valdes come—jes' as cool—to see him bouten it, he sw'ar agin an' stamp his cane at him. An' when he kaint sw'ar no more he shake his cane twel he is red; and shake it twel he is white agin. An' all de time he do it, Valdes stan's easy lak a gemman dat knowed he was an ole fool."

"I bet he could hold himself in on a game like that," I says. "I seen it on the boat. He can keep himself from doing what he wants to."

"Lawdy, it take HIM fo' to do dat. An' dat what de Colonel never COULD git over. Dat 's it. An' I spec's dat is de hardest thing to scuse in ANYONE. Jes' to be a fine gemman when dey is tryin' to make you r'ar up."

Aunt Liddy made the flat-iron sizz, to see if it was cool enough, and went on ironing. And then she stopped to heat it again.

"But I kaint see why he did n' go fo' Griswold —an' maybe kill him. 'Kase DAT way of overlookin' things ain't NACHEL fo' him."

"Well, I asked him about it," I says. "And the best I could make out was that when he was getting his mad up he would get to thinking about her—and laying blame on himself. There seemed to be something about his wife that kind of toned him down."

"Dat jes' it. Jes' it." And she went on about her Effie and made out she was so good it would make anybody good to think of her. And she claimed that when Valdes would think of having her—and what SHE would think—he could n't hurt nobody.

"And how did you know all about Griswold?" I says.

"Dat he want her befo' Valdes? Lawdy! I fin' dat out right away. Kase when Valdes come, an' de Colonel send her away to de convent, dat take her f'om Griswold too. Dat time I was cookin' on de boat. An' one day Griswold come to my kitchen doah an' he bring a lettah fo' me to take to Effie up at dat place, when I gits to St. Louis. Kase he wa' n't no steamboat mate den; he turned out to be dat aftahwahds. He say de lettah is from huh pa. An' he say how I has been huh Mammy f'om de first, an' how I is de only Mammy dat gal has got—an' so I was de one to take it. So one night when we is in St. Louis an' de salt-risin' bread is set, I put on mah best apron an' go up all de princip'l streets wha' de policemens say. An' I go past de big place whah dey is a light or two shinin' out of de flat side of de big building—an' I knock on de monst'ous big doah. Bimeby come one of de sistahs an' take me into de li'l room fo' to wait. De flo' was bare an' dey was jes' whitewash on de walls an' dey was a row of hahd wooden chaiahs. Dem chaiahs was all leanin' wid dey faces to de wall lak dey sayin' deir prayers all de time. I take one of de chaiahs an' turn it around

fo' to sit on; an' I say, 'Sho! Dis heah ain't no place fo' mah Effie.' IT look lak dey was too po' in de place fo' to have a ca'pet fo' de flo'. An' I say, 'Dis hain't no good-'nough place fo' mah Effie.

"'She come huhse'f to see who dah'"

kase she is used to bein' raised right—lak her ma.' An' I say, 'De Cunnel has jes' got to look roun' an' see wha' dey is a convent fo' quality gals.' An' while I is sayin' dat, de mothah-sistah she come huhse'f to see who dah. An' I tell her I come to see Effie, kase I her Mammy. She step out an'

make a big gong on de inside go ding-dong—it soun' lak she is ringin' de injine-bell fo' to staht up de convent. An' a doah swing back an' she come in wid mah Effie. Dat gal jes' so pleased to see her Mammy. She say I must n't worry 'bout how de house is furnish'—she say she doan' need them things when she is dah. An' she say how sweet an' kind all de sistahs is. Then I takes out de lettah. An' de mothah-sistah take it right outen mah hand an' look at it. I say it come from her pa—but dey wa' n't no name signed. So Effie look fo' to see. She look ser'ous an' den she smile. An' den she look ser'ous agin. She say how it is from Griswold an' hain't from the Cunnel at all; an' she sit right down wid us an' tell how Griswold ain't de one fo' her at all—an' how he done want to marry her. An' we two say what a good gal she is to tell all dem things right out to huh Mammy an' de sistah."

Aunt Liddy stopped and thought a while. And then she says:

"But Lawdy—She wa' n't tellin' us ever'thing *at all.* Kase look how she got outen dah, an' runned right away wid Valdes."

And then she took time to iron an apron.

"An' you was a-racin' when dat man went ovah wid de bucket?" she says.

"Yes," I says. "We was a-going good."

"Look a' heah," she says. "Is you sho' dat man is *daid?* Did n' yo' maybe jes' leave him behind while he is under de water—an' lose track of him?"

"When a man falls off a boat and you don't see him when you come to a stop he is drowned, is n't he?"

"I have seen 'em what *hain't*," she says.

"Dern if I know," I says.

We talked about everything like that; and then I staid outdoors mostly and climbed around the bluffs—because Rags was afraid of that cat, anyways—and in a couple of days the Muscoutah come back. But I had n't found out nothing that was worth while.

Them people on the Muscoutah tried to lay it over me on accounts of the Speed being busted. And they tried to make out that she strained herself in the race. Then I up and told the Captain the Speed was gone lame already when she beat them to a standstill. After that he did n't say nothing.

When I got back to St. Louis I found that the Speed was going to be laid up longer.

Seeing they had to lay up and fix things the captain decided it was a good time to go at the boilers and overhaul everything that had been needing it a long time. And I thinks to myself, "As long as we are going to lay up, it would maybe be a good time for me to try and get a job for a trip to New Orleans and see the Mississippi." So me and Rags went down and walked onto the Woodland and I asked could I speak to the captain if he was n't busy. The captain was a little man with polished boots—but that don't make no difference—and when he found what I wanted he looked around and said, "Where 's that pistol?"

A man ran and got an old pirate pistol that was big enough to be a shot-gun for that captain. He rested the pistol across his arm and pointed it into my face and says: "What was that you said?"

"I want a job," I says.

"'A job!' he says, drawing back the trigger"

That pistol was too old to shoot when the war was, I guess; anyways, I stood cool and did n't wink with it looking me in the eye like I was aiming back at him. I was n't afraid of the pistol. But I was awful afraid I would n't get the job.

"A JOB!" he says, drawing back the trigger till it clicked.

"Yes, sir," I says. "I thought I would like to go to New Orleans while the Speed is tied up; and I thought I would come and ask if you thought you could give me a job."

When he seen I did n't dodge nor say nothing more, he let the pistol down and looked at Rags.

"Will your dog eat meat?" he says.

"He will if it 's cooked," I says. "He 's a smarter dog than maybe you think. He can do tricks."

"What tricks, for instance?" he says.

I spoke to Rags; and when he seen I was saying something to him he perked up his ears. I hollered out the different things for him to do, and everybody come around to see. I made him sit up and lay down and roll over and be a dead dog and walk on three legs.

The captain looked me in the eye again like he was thinking it over.

"And can you do any tricks—like cleaning lanterns and peeling potatoes and such?" he says.

"Yes, sir," I says.

"Well, I guess all them tricks is good for a ticket. Say, Steward," he says, "take the boy back and have him grease the smoke-stacks."

Well, I went down the length of that big cabin walking slow and holding myself in so they would n't see I was too glad. By the time I got back there the cook had the big skin off a boiled ham and he handed it to me to grease the smoke-stacks. I felt right at home then.

"Where is the climbers?" I says. "We always

use them on the Missouri—but it always punches holes in the smoke-stacks.''

The cook he gave me a astonished look and laid down the ham skin.

''Maybe you 'd just better wait till there 's something else to be done,'' he says.

But there was never anything like that to be done; they never tried to fool me no more.

CHAPTER XVI

SAM RUNS DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI

THAT boat was one of those big stern wheelers that is only used for pushing. It gets a lot of big barges and takes them down river ahead of it. Ours was being filled with wheat at the elevator and we laid a couple of days waiting.

Well, I soon learned my work on the Woodland; and one of it was to drink a big tin-cup full of black coffee the first thing in the morning: or old John would n't be satisfied. Old John, which was the second cook, was so kneesprung you could see it through his apron; he had been a cook all his life and his slippers was all tramped over at the heel. The way he could hustle around a Mississippi cook-stove was a caution and he was a regular mother to anybody. He believed a fellow ought to drink a lot of black coffee the first thing in the morning: it was his way of running a steamboat. When I come down from the texas trying to keep my eyes open

about four o'clock in the morning John would keep his eye on me awhile, and if I did n't go after a while and take a tin cup down from the row that was hung up he would get dissatisfied and come and point up at them. Well, I did n't like it; but people has their notions and you might as well do it and keep them feeling satisfied. So I seen it was part of my work.

The captain and his men had that big fancy cabin all to themselves. It was as big as they had on the Natchez and could 'a' carried a hundred passengers, I guess; but they did n't bother with none unless somebody took a notion they wanted to travel that way and go the whole distance. The captain sat at the head of his table like it was his big private house on a plantation; the only passenger was a fat man and so he was awful important. Them men did n't have to take officers' lunch in the texas or sleep up there; they had the best that was going and the big cabin all to themselves.

After a while our barges was all filled with wheat inside and lashed together ahead, and the coal barges was fastened at our sides; and then we started down the Mississippi like a big white goose with a bunch of little ones. The little ones was about as big as canal boats. We did n't have so many niggers on that boat because you see the first landing we made after we left St. Louis was to be New Orleans; that is twelve hundred miles down. At New Orleans they would put the wheat on ocean boats by machinery, so we only needed niggers to bring coal to the boilers and shovel it in all the

time. One of them kind of stern-wheelers has steered twenty-five thousand tons down the river. And there was n't ever an ocean boat built that could take on the load one of them could come along with. You bet we had a big engine-room on

"I seen it was part of my work"

that boat: it was the main thing on the boat; and you bet the engineer he shined it up and was proud of it. I done a little of everything. Besides putting oil in the lanterns and watering the pilots they would let me take the red lanterns away ahead on the tow where they would hang them on each side

so that the high-toned pasenger boats could see us coming and clear out of our way. And on accounts of the officers having the cabin I had the texas all to myself like a little house on top of a big one. And the pilot 's house was on top of mine. I did n't have much to do. And when it was done me and Rags could sit up in the door of my little house and see the States go by.

The Mississippi ain't much. For a hundred miles the banks won't stick up more than a few feet. There 's trees all along both sides a good deal. Once in a while you see a town on the bank and pass it. The States is pretty much alike. There ain't much difference where they stop except that if you go clean to New Orleans the weather has changed. But that has just come natural. The main thing about the Mississippi is that lots of things has happened on it. There ain't no scenery to point at much; and so there ain't much to do but talk about old times.

The evening we started out the captain called me and said, "Do you see that stuff hanging away up there between the stacks?" I looked where he pointed and it was that long gray moss that grows on the trees down South; and it was hung for an ornament on the cross-pieces high up.

"Yes, sir," I says.

"Well, you are a smart boy," he says. "Go and ask the fat man if he noticed that stuff. He will want to know something about it. Tell him it is from a hay-boat that blew up near us. And that is some of the hay that come down out of the sky."

That was supposed to be a joke; but you have to do what the captain says. The captain was trying all ways to have some fun with him; but you could n't get the fat man to worry; he had a smile on his face that would make the weather change its mind. The captain thought maybe this would work. But it did n't. The fat man wanted to know all about it and when I told him he looked up with a smile on his face and said, "Well, now, IS N'T that interesting." The captain said you could n't get at that man; he was too fat.

The pilot's picture of the fat man

The officers would sit at the table and tell each other about the most horrible accidents and all the latest explosions. The fat passenger would listen and smile and eat. And then he would smile and say, "Well, now, IS N'T that interesting." That man never took trouble personal; he did n't seem to know it meant him. They all had to give it up. The pilot he give it up, too, and he drew a picture for the captain. It was just a picture of the top of a pilot-house sticking up out of the water. Everybody was supposed to be drowned. On top of the pilot-house was the fat man standing all alone looking at the river flowing by. There was a broad, happy smile on his

face and he was saying to himself, "Well, now, IS N'T this interesting."

Along toward evening we passed the mouth of the Ohio where Cairo is. We had been passing islands once in a while, too. They call them all kinds of names—horse and dog and goose and elk, or whatever they think of. But below the Ohio they give it up and numbered lots of them; numbers is easier to think up and you don't ever run out of them. The last place I remember that night below Cairo was Wolf Island, which was also number five in twenty miles; sometimes the islands wear out and you have only got the number left. But you have got to keep the number so that the others will come right.

Along about dark the captain heard that one of the niggers was a good dancer, so he let him come up on top with the big nigger that could play the mouth-organ. The cook sprinkled some salt where the deck would sound good under his feet and everybody come to see. That big nigger was good on the mouth-organ; it come natural to him. When he did n't feel like holding it with his hands he could play it just with his mouth. He wrapped his lips right around it with the ends sticking out of the corners of his mouth and him a-going it like a horse champing a bit. He would wrap his tongue around it and turn it so it stuck endways out of his mouth—and it a-playing all the time. When he played high notes it would pop out and when he played low ones it would pop in like he was going to swallow it—and it a-playing all the time.

"And it a-playing all the time"

He could certainly handle a mouth-organ with his face. The nigger that was dancing got to putting in extra licks and dancing the variations; and then the mouth-organ nigger put his hands to his face like he was going to smother himself and the mouth-organ to death; and then he played fancy. It would go soft and low a while like you could hear it com-

ing away off in the distance; and then it would tremble and sound sad and get louder and louder and bust out like a whole brass band with all the little horns a-going. And that buck-and-wing nigger was going it like base-drums and sandpaper; he could dance all around himself while he was stomping and keeping time. The captain watched every step and liked it awful well; but he never said it was good nor nothing. Captains dassent. The fat passenger stood and smiled broad. It was awful nice, and dark as pitch with the red lanterns hanging on the barges away ahead of us, and the boilers flashing out like lightning, and the pilot sweeping the big streak of light out ahead, and the big wheel churning the water behind like half a dozen flour-mills; it was like an evening concert in a summer garden by a waterfall with fireworks throwed in. When the captain had had his fun out he sent them niggers to go and shovel coal again. And the fat passenger he turned to the captain and said, "Well, now, IS N'T that interesting."

And in about half an hour we struck something worth while. We caught up with the boat that should have been a day ahead of us; and she was lying helpless with her tow in the middle of the river. A sawyer had caught one of the head barges and poked a hole into it. If that barge had been a boat by itself it would have been sunk long ago; but it could n't go clean down because it was tied to its mates. The ones on each side of it was leaning over toward each other with the weight between them; they looked like two drunken men trying to

keep another one up and get him home. That other tow-boat could n't do nothing but stay and hold things steady till we would come along and go back to Cairo for help. We left our barges there and turned back to the Ohio to get a diver. But the right man was n't at Cairo; he had gone a few miles up the river; so we kept on up the Ohio. Well, it did n't look like there would be much doing for a few hours and I was so sleepy I guessed I would go to my texas and lay down a while. I went to sleep and I guess I must a-slept pretty sound.

CHAPTER XVII

CLANCY BOBS UP

THE next thing I knew I sat up sudden in my bunk with an awful rumbling going on—I had been dreaming about a boiler explosion and it sounded like it had come true. I ran out to find out what it was; I had never heard a noise like that before since we blew up; and I was scared. I found they was trying a steam siphon to see if they had it working good. We had got back with a diving scow, and the diver was sitting on a chair in the middle of the scow with our headlight turned on him while he was having his head screwed on. The niggers was throwing in the coal lively and getting up lots of steam for the siphon. A steam siphon is a big steam-pipe fixed so that it will blow across the mouth of another pipe that is stuck down in the water; it is like a perfume squirter that is called an atomizer, and when the boilers is turned

loose it is like forty thousand Chinamen blowing water on a shirt. It is a pump that has n't got any time to have works to it. When you get up close to it, like I did, it makes you feel rumbly. The water comes up that pipe as fast as it can hurry and is shot away with the steam and knocked all to pieces. When they spring a leak on one of them boats they don't get a trumpet and holler, "Man the pumps!" or anything like that; and they don't pump and pump till they 're pretty near dead and wish the boat would go down and give them a rest, and then have the pump break and lash a spar on and pump more and give up again and want to lay down and forget it, only the captain tells them not to get discouraged because land is only a hundred miles away and they 're doing pretty well and he 'll cave their heads in with a marlinspike if they don't. They don't do that way. They get out their perfume squirter and cough it right up and spit it out. And maybe they can't atomize some! they 're so used to being wrecked they 've got it down fine.

When I stood up close to the siphon and found I was n't afraid to do it they turned it off some and I thinks to myself, "I had better go up on top where I can look down and not miss any of the rest." The copper head did n't want to screw on to the fellow just right; so the other fellow had to unscrew it some and try again. Its face was just a big glass eye; and when they twisted his neck and the face came round on the other side again it looked kind of unnatural. The headlights shined down together through the dark and lighted up just him;

it looked like the big glass eye needed all the light there was a-going. When it was on tight the fellow put his mouth close to the side of the diver's head and hollered into him. Then he put his ear to the side of the head and listened close. And when they had talked through his head awhile everything was all right and the diver stood up.

He lifted one foot and made it take a step; and then he made the other foot take a step. It takes a lots of lead on a man's feet to make him hang straight in the current of the Mississippi. That way he walked across the scow. The wheel of the air-pump was going round and round while he walked with the long white hose going like a steam-pipe into his head and him lifting his lead feet like he was a machinery man. Well, I bet if they had turned off the pipe he would 'a' run down mighty quick. A fellow would n't stop to think that a man is just machinery, too, till he seen it with his eyes that way.

There was a rope tied under his arms and the other fellow went along with it in his hands because you see he had to hold the diver the right height in the river. When they were to the edge of the scow the diver got down and pushed his feet over. Then he let go of everything and down he went kerplunk into the river. Then there was nothing of him but the white hose leading into the dark water and the wheel of the pump going slow and steady and the other fellow holding the rope like he was fishing. The men put a big canvas over the side of the barge and the diver got hold of the edge of it. Once in a while you could see the canvas

being pulled as the diver worked down in the river. However he done it down in that muddy water in the night time I don't know—as big as his eye was: but he got that canvas fitted down around the boat so that it stopped the hole. Then the fellow hauled up on the rope and the diver come up like a big fish that could n't help itself; and they give him a hand and got him on his feet. Then he walked back to the chair and sat down with his hands on his knees—and the pump going round and round and giving him air in the middle of the night. I guess he was waiting to see if his job would work.

By that time the siphon was going for keeps. One of them is awful extravagant of steam; it blows right out of the boilers and takes more firing than if it was a race; and the safety valve don't get a chance at all. The niggers threw back the fire-doors and shoved it in steady; it was like the boilers just held their mouths open to take in the coal. I would n't 'a' missed it for anything. It was a great sight out in the middle of the night on the water with them half-naked niggers sweating in the glare of the boilers and that steam-devil blowing out the power and the headlights shining down on the white diver connected to his breathing-machine and them big tow-boats with the smoke boiling out of their stacks—it was better than going to a fire to see all that we was doing with steam and fire and water. I bet if an Indian in 1812 had seen that diver doing all that out in the middle of the Mississippi he would 'a' thought it was the earthquake come up to get air. I bet nobody would

'a' had to coax him to leave that country. I was pretty near scared of that siphon myself till I made myself stand up close and get interested in it. It was blowing out the steam and water all mixed up and I was awful glad it was doing it. I staid right there. I could n't go away.

In a little while we had things so the other towboat could take care of herself: then we let go and took our tow again. I started to go up on top again but old John stopped me and took me into the cabin and made me drink some coffee so that I could sleep good. Our day pilot was in there, too. He said it looked bad for the pilot on that other boat because it was the second trip a-running that he done the same thing. We was beginning to drop away from there with our tow; so I ran up to my texas to take another look.

When I looked back the diver was standing with the diving suit let down around his feet and his head beside him and the headlight a-lighting him up. One of the fellows come along and slapped him on the back and he give the fellow a poke and turned half-way around.

I would 'a' sold out myself right then for two cents. That diver which I had been looking at the outside of all the time, and seen go down into the river and come up again and sit on a chair right near me without me seeing the inside of him till right now, when I was a few hundred yards away and had a thousand miles to go before I could even start to come back, was CLANCY. It made me turn sick and disgusted with surprise. He reached

into his hip pocket and got a plug and took a chew —just like Clancy. Another fellow come along and shook hands and reached him a bottle which he put to his mouth and turned his face up to the light. It was Clancy. Then he stepped out of the feet of his suit and walked over to the little tool-house. I would 'a' known then it was him if I had n't even seen his face. It was Clancy a-walking. There was that scow now about a quarter of a mile away; and there was shore somewhere in the dark, but no more

"It was Clancy"

than a five minutes' swim for me. And it would be a week before we would ever get to land and two thousand miles to travel again before I could get back here to Cairo.

I felt like jumping right overboard and striking out for shore—I guess I could 'a' kept from being caught by the wheel if I took a good jump. But Rags could n't. What does he know about wheels? It was n't no use to think about it. I wished I had n't gone to bed in the first place; I wished that blame siphon or something had woke me up sooner; I wished I had n't been called into the cabin just when Clancy was having his head took off; I wished everything. But what good is wishing? That don't get you nothing. We was going right along to New Orleans, no matter what I wished. Nobody don't know how powerful steam is till it 's got hold of you like that and taking you away where you don't want to go to. I stood and looked back until there was n't any light left to look at. Then I went into my texas and lit the lantern and sat down on the bunk. I started to think it over—but what 's the sense in talking about it.

I could n't forget things long enough to go to sleep. I guessed I better do something sensible to make me forget it; it was too foolish to think about. There was the round top of an old stool that had come loose from its legs and I had practised till I could almost spin it on my finger like a minstrel man. So I thought I would practise some now. But I could n't keep my mind on it right; it would go crooked on my finger and start to wobble and

fall down and roll all over. Once it took after Rags and chased him under the bunk; then it wobbled over and started to run down and went rumbledy-bumbledy round and round so long that it scared him out again. After that he was awful afraid of it, and I guessed I better quit.

I laid back and could n't think of nothing else but the bad luck me and Clancy just had—only Clancy did n't know about it. The worst kind of bad luck is the good luck that you just miss. I bet lots of people has bad luck that they don't know about. And that 's lucky for them. That come pretty near being good luck for me and Clancy if it had n't turned out wrong. I bet if it had been good luck and things all going out of their way to bring us together I would n't 'a' sat up and thought about it at all; it would 'a' just been natural. If I have any more bad luck like that I don't want to know about it. I could n't think of nothing but the five hundred dollars we would get if I could ever find Clancy again and he found the woman and we could both find Valdes—and what I would buy with the money. Gee! I bet I spent thousands of dollars that night. I got more than I could if I really had it; because if it was real money I could n't spend it more than once.

There was n't much left of the night; and I had n't laid down long when I seen it was getting gray outside. So I went down and drank my coffee. When I come out of the cabin I noticed that we had slowed up some and was edging over nearer to shore, and I says to myself, "What is this; are

we going to make a landing?'' It was n't that; but I soon seen what it was; they was going to drop an empty coal barge. The man was on it already; he was getting ready to cast loose when the time come. I ran quick and got Rags and took him down there and jumped aboard. They told me to get out of that, was I crazy; and I told them to leave me alone because I knew what I was doing and I must go back to Cairo and see that diver, he was a friend of mine. The tow-boat shoved us ashore and kept a-going; and the man got the barge warped to a tree. It felt mighty good to be on land again where you can go anywheres you want.

I had to waste some time telling the man why I was going back to Cairo; then he gave me some lunch in my pockets and I started. He said it was more than thirty miles. Me and Rags walked and walked and at noon we sat down in the woods and ate the lunch. Then we kept on walking and walking with the river in sight; and when evening come we had n't got nowheres. I was pretty near ready to drop down and go to sleep any place; but I kept on a piece, and after a while we come to a farm where there was a haystack. The cows had eaten out a hollow place in the side of it and we laid down in there. I could n't go to sleep for a while because Rags kept hunching. He don't kick none but he is a great dog to hunch.

In the morning when I woke the sun was shining bright and warm against the haystack, and the birds was chirping sassy all around, and the cows had all got up and started to work eating for the

day. I had been so deep asleep that I had to lay awhile and think up who I was and where I was going; then I stretched myself all over and brushed the hay off and kept on a-going.

When it was about dinner-time by the sun I come to the Ohio and that brought us to a stop. Cairo was over on the other side; and there was the diving scow tied up at the bank. There was n't any way to get across; and I was so tired I was afraid to try swimming. There was nobody around the scow. I sat and watched it awhile, and then I walked up the Ohio a piece. After a while I come to a skiff; and when I found the man that owned it and told him who I was he got me something to eat and set me over on the other side.

There was n't anybody around the scow or any sign of anything; the door of the toolhouse was locked. After I had inquired around considerable I found the boss; he was leaning over a fence smoking and tying knots in a piece of twine and watching a fellow pour tar into the cracks of a flat-bottom row-boat; and the smell of the tar made me awful hungry again. He listened to what I had to say and then he smoked his pipe a couple of times and tied a knot in the twine and said it was too bad I had n't come along yesterday afternoon because he thought Clancy had n't left town till towards evening. I asked him to tell me where Clancy had went, and he said he did n't know; he did n't say particular where he was going. He frazzled out the end of the twine like he was picking tow and undid the knot and tried it another

way. He did n't know nothing about Clancy except that he had done the diving job for ten dollars.

I told him I was from the Woodland and how I got off of her; and then he told me how it was that

"I sat and watched it"

he got Clancy. You see when the Woodland come to Cairo for help, the diving scow was up the Ohio at Mound City. The boss had to look all over that town for the diver; and after a while he found him with a friend in a saloon. He was n't in very good shape to work but he braced up and bragged he could do it; so they took him to the scow and

fetched him along on it; they had to have somebody to do the job. While they was dropping down the Ohio they put the suit on him, and the copper head, and pumped air into him to see if he would work; they thought that might get him sobered up. But it did n't. After they had him in they had to poke and holler into him and rap him on the head before he would get up and show what he could do. And then he could n't budge his feet. He sat down; and they kept pumping him—and the smell of whiskey coming stronger out of the vent-hole—and he did n't wake up to business at all. It worked just the other way from what they expected. When he was in there where there was nothing doing, and nobody to talk to, he got disinterested and went to sleep; and they had to take his head off quick to see what was the matter. He was getting drunker all the time. They seen it was no use; so when they got to Cairo they stopped there and did n't know what to do. Clancy was down by the river talking to some men, and when he found what was wanted he said he could do the job. When they found he was n't a regular diver they did n't like to try him; so he told them he could do diving without any machinery and if they did n't believe he could do what he claimed they could get somebody else; it was n't none of his funeral. So then they took him.

When he was done and got back in the morning early he collected his ten dollars; and then he was around town most of the day. That was all the boss knew about him. But he said maybe some of

the other fellows might know where he was bound for; so he took me along with him and asked. One said he had probably gone to Pittsburgh or St. Louis; but another thought maybe he had gone to New Orleans; he spoke about all them places. They did n't know nothing about it.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CONSOLIDATED AGGREGATION

CAIRO is a low monotonous place; I don't like it anyways. They call this part of the country Egypt. But this ain't the Egypt where they found Moses in the bulrushes; that is a different one that is in Europe. I could n't rest much sitting on the edge of a board sidewalk looking at old frame houses, so I guessed I had better go and find a place of my own. I went up the river and seen a bush that looked like it would be a place; so I went to take it. But just when I got to the bush and looked around on the other side I seen somebody already had it. A man was washing his feet in the river. He looked up and said "Hello," and seemed pretty friendly; so I sat down near by. When he had one foot washed he took a cloth and wrapped it around it, just so, and slipped on a rubber overshoe.

"What 's the matter; have you got a sore foot?" I says.

"Me have sore feet? Them 's socks. Did n't you ever see army socks?"

I told him I had n't and he said they was the only kind there was any sense in.

"I seen somebody already had it"

I watched him wash the other foot: he seemed to be awful particular about it.

Then he spread out a clean white cloth that looked like a handkerchief and took a corner between his toes and gave it turn one way and a turn another way, just so, and slipped on the other overshoe.

"You seem to take good care of your feet," I says.

"Don't I have to?" he says. "I may have to walk swords any time. So I keep them soft. Soft feet don't cut."

Well, I never knew before they had to walk swords in the army; but he seemed to know what he was talking about. He said everybody ought to wear army socks and he explained about them. Ordinary socks wears right out at one place and then they 're no good. These kind can be changed with a different corner between the toes every time and wear equal all over. Ordinary socks are hard to wash and then they are hard to dry, because they are double thickness like a bag and when you hang them up they won't dry quick on the inside. These kind are cheaper to begin with and can be washed and dried oftener and wear longer and are more clean and comfortable on the feet. Besides that they don't shrink and are always your size. And he said when you wore overshoes like he did to keep his feet soft – which was on accounts of the perspiration—it was mighty important to have socks that could be washed out easy. He seemed to know all about feet.

I bet Valdes would n't 'a' thought that. He would n't wear no handkerchiefs. Some people like one thing and some likes another. People is different. I guess it is all according to what you are used to.

"Are you an Egyptian?" he says.

"I 'm from Missouri," I says.

"Oh! then you are a Piker."

"No, I ain't no Piker; don't I talk St. Louis?" I says. "Did you just get out of the army?"

He was just stooping over tying two ends of his socks neat around his ankle; and when he pulled up his pants I seen blue and red snakes and frogs all over his legs.

"Don't you see what I am?" he says, pulling them up higher and letting them down to his feet again. "I 'm with the show-boat," he said, pointing farther up the river.

I looked up there and seen a big flat-boat with canvas hung around the sides like a tent. When I seen that I talked to him more; and when he found Rags could do tricks he made right up with him.

"Stubbs would like a comical-looking dog like that," he said.

"Who 's Stubbs?" I says.

"He 's the clown. If you have n't got any place to put up, come and see the Professor; maybe he 'd take you. You can get something to eat, anyway."

When I got nearer to the boat I could read what it said on a strip of canvas. It said "Prof. Lagorio's Consolidated Aggregation and Floating Musee." Then I knew it was a show-boat sure enough.

The Tattooed Man opened up a split in the canvas and took me inside. The Fat Woman had a blue-painted board across some seat props and was pressing the Giant's pants. A lady had her Circassian wig in her hand and was cleaning it in some cornmeal in a bowl. She brushed it around in the big bowl and rubbed in the cornmeal and shook it out till her stand-up hair was all cleaned. The Giant was working with a hammer on some pegs that held a sweep. There was some blue lumber for seats piled up, and some chests and a base

drum and a barrel of gasoline, with two big burners laying on top, and a gasoline stove to cook on. Stubbs, which was the Clown, had some gasoline in

"The fat lady patted me on the head"

a pie-pan and he had some corks on a wire, burning them to get the black off. The Fat Lady patted me on the head and was sorry for me when she

found I was hungry; she said it must be awful to be hungry. The Tattooed Man told the Professor about me and then he told the other lady to give me something to eat; and Stubbs he was looking Rags over.

They was just getting the Musee ready to start. You see the boss was n't a school-professor like the one that was on the Speed. He said he was a professional professor. He had been coming down the Ohio with an Uncle Tom show which performed in halls; but when he come to the end of the Ohio, where you have to float South, it was the Uncle Tom limits. He could n't go an inch further with no Uncle Tom and Simon Legree; so he let that troupe go and wished he had something else besides him and his wife. Him and his wife could do it all; they said so; but they did n't look like enough. Just then a show busted up at Cairo, and the manager skipped out and left the freaks like a lot of orphans; so the Professor took them in; and he decided to put on a Musee because he said the Fat Woman and the Tattooed Man would n't rouse no sectional prejudice or jealousies in anybody as far as he could see. With them he could keep right down the Mississippi.

The lady that was going to be a Circassian queen was his wife. She had been playing Liza and could be a leading lady; and when things took a turn she was Madam Zoola, seventh daughter of a seventh daughter and born with a veil. Her and the Professor knew their business; they said so. The Professor, whose real name was Smith, was going to be

a magician and mesmerizer now; he had been playing Legree. He went around in a cutaway vest with a diamond in his shirt.

I liked Stubbs the best; he seemed more like real folks. They picked him out of the busted show because he could double in brass, which meant that he could do most anything and play the cornet. I asked Stubbs if the Professor and his wife could double in brass, and he said yes, they had enough brass to double in anything. The Professor was always talking about hustling whether there was anything to be done or not. And when he was n't doing that he was talking about how you could n't depend on some people and how they did n't have any appreciation of gratitude and would leave you in the lurch the first chance they got. He said them things mostly to his wife. But the rest could hear it and take it to themselves.

Stubbs he had Rags out on the bank trying him; and I went out there, too. I asked him what the Professor was complaining about and who it was had done him wrong. Stubbs told me why it was; he explained it right out. First place, when he had the Uncle Tom show he had to rent halls and places to perform in because his show-boat was only a scow and did n't have a house on it that people could come on. But with the freaks from the busted show all he would have to do now was to throw out a tent, which would n't cost any rent; and besides more people would pay to come into a tent than into a hall or a boat; that is human nature. So that made more profit and less expense. Second place the

side-show was cheap. The lanky boy did n't cost nothing; he was just a pick-up that the Professor had learned to be the Human Dictionary. The Professor and his wife did n't count for wages because they belonged to themselves. It would 'a' needed three men to run the scow and put up the tent, anyway--which was Stubbs and the Tattooed Man and the Giant. And so the Professor was praising up all the hustlers that he knew. That left only one real professional to pay for doing nothing—which was the Fat Lady. That made less expense and he got them all cheap because they were busted—which made it still more less. That was why the Professor was complaining and finding fault with folks. He was in luck. And he was afraid it would n't last. And them people worried him on that accounts. So he was talking about people's ungratitude for what you done for them; that is human nature, Stubbs said. He was n't going to let it get into their heads that they was any object to him.

I went back on the scow and the Professor's wife was agreeing with him and sympathizing. She said it was the way with everybody, and it would 'a' been money in her pocket and the Professor's if they had never been so good-natured and took people in and had just watched out for themselves. She said they had always been imposed upon and nobody appreciated nothing and if it turned out that way again she was going to give up doing anything for anybody again. She said maybe they would learn the lesson some time. The Professor he

talked right out plain to the lanky boy and hoped he would know enough to appreciate the advantages he was giving him and stick to the show. He did n't let them people forget that they was busted and he took them in.

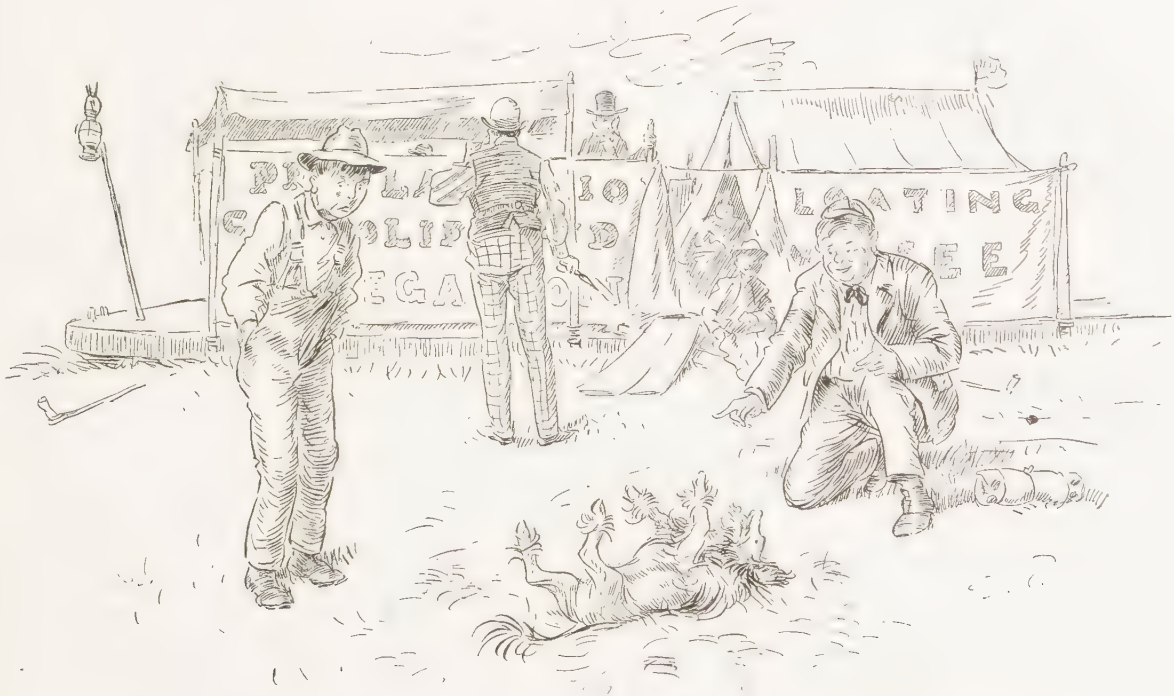
When they got through, the Professor's wife told the Fat Lady that she might come and help wash and wipe the pans and dishes. The Fat Lady took that personal. And when the Professor's wife made some remarks to herself, it hurt the Fat Lady's feelings, and she began to cry. She had a little handkerchief with lace around it that was n't half big enough for her face and she wiped away a couple of tears and said she had n't never done nothing like that in her life. It hurt her feelings awful that they should think anything like that of her. And when the Professor's wife said some more about some people she knew the Fat Lady got uppish. She said that just because she pressed the Giant's pants, which was only professional courtesy, they need n't think she was that kind at all. She put some powder on her handkerchief and dabbed the tear-marks and said she never thought when she was with Barnum and was viewed by the crowned heads of Europe that she would ever be floating on an old scow. Then she quieted down and arranged her diamond necklace and started up a little fan about as big as your hand and looked as uppish as if she was a crowned head herself. You bet they could n't make her do nothing except sit and show herself professional. After that I heard the Professor's wife telling him that if *she*

"They need n't think she was that kind at all"

was like *some* people she could 'a' been a Fat Lady herself. The Professor said yes.

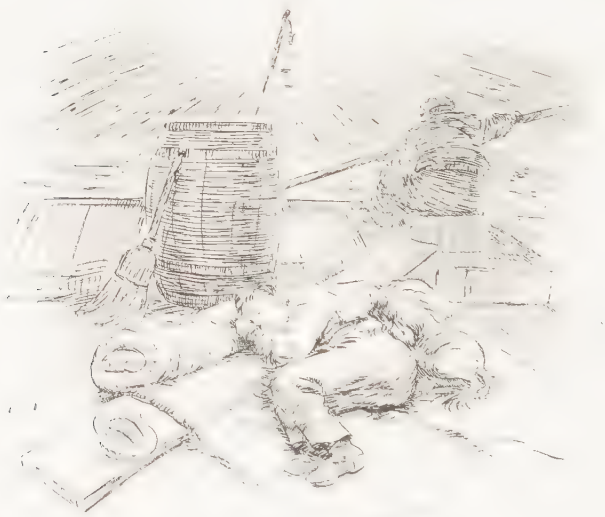
The Fat Lady took that personal. And she told the Giant and Stubbs how it hurt her pride to have the Professor make illusions at her that way. And Stubbs said, what else could you expect?—Was n't that a magician's business? He said he thought the Professor imagined he was playing Legree yet and he hoped he would soon forget the part.

The Professor said I might go along up-town with Stubbs and get some red spotted goods. He said Stubbs would know what kind of a collar a clown dog would want. And he held Rags back so that he could n't come along. Stubbs was a short-built fellow and broad across the back, with a stocky neck; he was awful strong and quick. He told me not to go into the show business and never to be a clown; he said it took the constitution of a horse, especially with a wagon show. He had been doing leaps over horses and elephants and not getting good sleep and giving two shows a day and pulling up stakes at night and being jolted along in a wagon while he rested; if he was educated and could write a good hand he would never stay in that business. But the Professor did n't bother him none; Stubbs did n't take that serious. Sleeping on a scow and taking things easy would be a change for him; and a little tumbling every day or two would only be exercise for him, and get him into condition for the big show again. He said he was only going along for fun—which most clowns would n't do. But he got his wages too.



"Next to things"

When we got back Rags was a lion dog; his hair was all lying on the grass. And his name was changed to Dom Pedro. I was awful mad at first. But Rags rolled around and wiggled his back on the grass like he enjoyed being out of his hair and right next to things that way; so I seen it was maybe better for him to have a haircut. Besides,



"And went to sleep"

he would only have to keep fleas off his ankles and neck and the end of his tail; so now I was glad I did n't say nothing to the Professor.

That afternoon Stubbs and the Giant shoved off

the scow and the show started. Cairo went floating past and we came out of the big mouth of the Ohio into the main waters of the Mississippi, and the old scow turned south like she knew the way. We let her go along most any old way; a scow can float sideways just as fast as any other. It ain't like a steamer that it makes any difference what its lines are. The Giant would give the sweep a push once in a while if things did n't suit him. But mostly it suited him; and if he was smoking he would n't bother. We went around island number five, and it was so big the current was pretty swift on both sides and we brushed it some; and after a while I noticed that the Consolidated Aggregation sign was on the other end; but that did n't make no difference. We did n't have to bother much; we did n't draw much water and it was pretty good all along. There was a little army tent which we could sleep in and a piece of canvas put up to keep off the sun and rain. After supper, when it got dusk and time to put out our light—which I mean that we lit it and hung it out—I was awful tired and sleepy. Me and Rags laid down on an old leaping mat and went to sleep.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PROFESSOR IN ACTION

HEN I woke up it was just getting ready to be morning; it was kind of hazy. Nobody but Stubbs was staying up; the rest was sleeping. Only the two ladies was in the tent; the rest was laying around—and at first I thought it was the Giant snoring, but it was n't, I guess it must 'a' been the Fat Lady. We was moving along swift, but there was n't much to show it; the trees along the shore was only half come out of the night. You can't hang your hand over the side of a scow and see the water ripple against it; you and the water is moving along together. Some ways a scow is like sailing, only it is more that way. You can see the shapes ashore moving along past and no waves from the boat and it all quiet and still, except the snoring; it is like God pushing you along.

After a while, when the Fat Lady crawled out of the tent with her hair all tied up in curl papers, we

had breakfast; and while we was eating New Madrid come. So we shoved in.

Me and the lanky boy went out to distribute bills. When we come back they had the tent all up, with little flags a-flying; it was all circusy. People was commencing to come around and gawp, specially boys. They followed me around and looked at Rags and wondered; and the men looked at the big painting of the snake charmer. The Professor got that from the other show, and he picked it out because we did n't have no charmer, and so he said it would be an addition to the features. The Giant and the Fat Lady had to stay on the boat together till the tent was ready because people could 'a' seen them for nothing if they walked around. But the Tattooed Man could go around in his clothes; he did n't need a tent to hide him.

I found out all about New Madrid. That is where the big earthquakes happened in 1811 and 1812. That was an awful big accident. Thousands of acres sunk right down and the river run in and made lakes and marshes that was n't there before, and the burying-ground was jolted off the town and went into the river—the whole geography was changed forever and is that way now. It busted up the town and all around. The bottom of the river was bulged up so that it stopped the water, and the Mississippi started to flow the other way and go back where it came from. I did n't believe it at first; but it is so. Islands was wrecked and sunk and when they went down they dragged along the boats that was tied to them. But them was n't

steamboats; I found that out. Steamboats was n't out there yet; they was keelboats.

There was Indians left there yet when that happened; Stubbs knew about that. A man told him how it was. After one of the earthquakes, when the rumpus was all over for a while, an old Indian he stood and looked mighty solemn about what had happened. And then he says to himself, "Great Spirit too much whiskey."

"Her hair all tied up in curl papers"

Gee! I bet there would be something doing if anything like that ever happened. I got to feeling pretty serious when I heard that and got to thinking about it. But if there was ever going to be another I would like to come in a balloon and see it, though.

Stubbs' part of the show was to come outside and give a free performance—just to be liberal and make people see how much we must have inside. He was the one that done most to make the show pay. I was awful afraid they would n't keep me and Rags with the show on account of him being so deaf.

But it was just the other way; Stubbs turned that right into new tricks. You see, Rags would sit up as long as you wanted him to; and he would n't get down and do something else till you hollered it loud to him. Well, Stubbs made folks imagine that his clown dog was a dog that did n't believe in working unless his boss did; so Stubbs would tell him, in an ordinary voice, to do things and Rags would n't. You could n't coax him to move; he would just sit up and keep looking at the folks. Then Stubbs would throw a somersault and holler *louder* at Rags—just like he was catching his breath and done it natural—and then Rags would roll or do anything he said. It made everybody tickled to see a dog that was so intelligent and had notions of his own; they did n't know it was because he was kind of deaf and had Missouri mud in his ears. Stubbs said to me that there is good in everything in the world if you only learned to see it. He had heard it said and it was pretty true.

The main luck we had was at night, because then the news had had all day to get around into the country. They come on horses and old spring wagons and on foot and all stood a-gawping at the big burner blazing outside and the tent all lit up with the one inside shining through—it was pretty thin.

The show was most ready to start up. While the curiosities was getting onto their platforms the Professor was telling Stubbs to get ready to do his best because there was a big crowd if he could only get them to come in. Stubbs he leaned against the center-pole looking sad and solemn till everything was ready; then the lanky boy started to turn the grind-organ and the Professor's wife stood in her Circassian hair and beat the drum in time with it—you 'd 'a' thought there was a whole brass band started up inside the tent. Then Stubbs put on his broad smile all of a sudden, ready to go to work. He ran to the door of the tent and come out of it on a back somersault and threw a row of flip-flaps through that crowd that made them all stand back. He could throw spotters and gainers and twisters; he was as good as Quigley or anybody in Barnum and you bet he let them folks see it. He come down springy like a rubber man and took his hat out of his pocket and introduced his dog and stated that he was the greatest thing that ever happened since the earthquake; he flattered them up on New Madrid and made them laugh and got off all his jokes about if a little lemon is sour a big one is sourourer—which was joke number six—and more

funny stuff than you 'd think he could ever learn. Rags was sitting up and looking solemn; and while

"And come out of it on a back somersault"

Stubbs was getting his breath back he would do funny things with him; he could get more out of Rags than *I* ever could.

Then he threw gainer flip-flaps—which he turned backward, but went forward the wrong way from what you think he would—and threw down his hat and done a spotter right onto it, and put it into his pocket again. He kept his hat in his baggy pocket and only took it out to be polite or spin it on a stick. Once he let it fly off the stick and go way off into the crowd, and everybody rushed to get it, and two men brought it to him; and he was awful polite when they handed it to him (lots of the people went into the show just on accounts of that). He got awful well acquainted with them and done a leap which he come down on the back of his neck like it was an accident and everybody was pleased about what a dern fool he was. When he had them people just right he ran out and called their attention and showed them what he really could do; he done a spotter-twister, which is about the limit, and took a start and went back into that tent like a whirligig, with Rags yapping and barking and wagging his tail after him.

Just as Rags went into the tent the Professor jumped up on his ticket platform and rolled his sleeves away back on his striped cuffs and orated so that you could 'a' heard him a mile. And all the time he talked he jingled a box of brass checks like money was common and the show was a great success; he got me interested, too. He said how we had Zuleeka, the only genuine Circassian Princess in the known world; and Madam Albion, the largest and biggest lady ever born and just from her European triumph; and Monsieur de Varden,

"'We have them all'"

the great explorer who was tattooed by the Mozambique Islanders; and the Gigantic Gulliver, the man who never stopped growing and was now in the eighth foot of his height.

"Come in, Ladies and Gentlemen, and bring the

little ones.—Step right up and get your ticket for the great moral and elucidating show. We have the great Eureka, the Human Dictionary—see the phonetic, linguistic, orthographic wonder, the nemonic mental marvel of the universe. See nature in her most marvelous creations, her wildest flights of fancy—we have them all, we have them A-A-L-L-L. See the mirth-provoking Pico, the highest salaried joker in the amusement world—see Dom Pedro—see Zuleeka—see Madam Albion—you have heard of them all your lives and here they are. See the Circassian Princess, the only living representative of the Caucasian race—see the living picture gallery; look him over, look him over. Get your change ready and keep a-moving; it is the last and only performance in the city of New Madrid.''

He had me gawping, too. He blowed that tent so full of wonder that you 'd most expect to see it go up like a balloon if it was n't tied down. I had to go in and take another look at that show myself. I could hardly believe I had been laying around and eating with that circus and thinking they was just common trash. The crowd began to come forward; and when one man bought a ticket they kept a-coming as fast as he could talk and make change. When they began to come, the Circassian Princess, which was the Professor's wife, dropped the base drum and ran and got on her platform. Then the lanky boy shoved the hand-organ into my hands and got onto his platform. That show was awful short of hands and they needed me. I

never thought I could play so good on the hand-organ before; it made me feel like the whole circus. And with the Professor and the hand-organ going it together, and the money clinking in the box, the Consolidated Aggregation was started up full blast. The people stood around Rags in his clown collar and wondered at him, too.

A circus ain't much when it is folded up and put in a box. But when it is all spread out and filled with light and talk it most takes you off your feet.

We done good at that place. By the time we had got things loaded on the flat-boat and ready to shove out, the night was half gone. I kept sitting up; I could n't go to sleep. The lanky boy was on watch and he was so sleepy that he kept a-nodding on his stool. But sometimes he would get up and give the sweep a push. You see you can't steer a flatboat by just holding a rudder one side or another; you are just standing still in the water and going along with it, so it would n't answer a rudder if you had one. It would n't do no more good than to turn the rudder of a steamboat that ain't running. So you row the end around with a sweep, which is an oar so big and long that you start on one side of the boat and walk clear across to the other side leaning against it and pushing slow and hard; and it takes hard pushing because when you ain't got power on the boat you 've got to put power in the rudder. Then it don't do no good; you can only change the direction you are pointing. And that don't make no difference; you 'll go straight

down the river no matter which way you 're pointing. But with a big long raft of logs it makes a difference, because if you let that go sideways or catacornered it would take up too much room in the river and folks would be mad. But our boat was about as wide as it was long and so it did n't make any difference as long as we did n't care. And we did n't. What 's the use a-working all the time just to keep a favorite end ahead?

Them oar-rudders is on everything that ain't got power and all they 're good for is to keep things going the narrow way so that the Mississippi don't get too crowded. But when you use two sweeps you can row sideways, and that is how you get ashore—unless it is shallow enough to pole. We did n't work much except to make a landing; then we had to. But you don't really steer with one.

Someways I felt just like going to sleep; but my mind was so full of the show yet I could n't do it. The most wonderful thing was the Human Dictionary. The lanky boy had a dictionary which the Professor would hand out into the crowd and let anyone open it any place and put his finger on a word. And no matter what word it was the lanky boy could say off the definition and tell what page it was on and how many lines from the top or anything about it. He knew the dictionary all by heart. Nobody did n't know what to think of that. And neither did I. Someways I had been thinking the lanky boy was a kind of a fool; but I guess his brains all went to memory. I sat there and looked at the lanky boy nodding on his stool and kept

a-wondering. I would n't 'a' thought it was in him.

When it was about dawn I guessed I had better take a swim and that would quiet me down and warm me up and make me stop thinking and feel dozy like it always does. So me and Rags went in; and it was fine because I did n't have to swim against the current to keep from being carried away from the place where my clothes was. When you and the current and your clothes are going along together it is like swimming in dead water; you would n't know there was a swift current in the Mississippi at all unless something passed you that was standing still. I never swum in no dead water, but it must be fun; you can just lazy around and go one direction as good as another. I come out and pulled Rags up on the scow and he shook himself and felt fine. And when he shook he did n't throw water all over everything like he used to, because he had a haircut. It was a big mistake to make all the swimming dogs long-haired. Then we went to sleep.

We did n't get to the next place that was worth while till late in the afternoon; so we decided we better lay still and spend the time advertising for to-morrow. Me and the lanky boy went out with bills again. He went into a saloon and got separated from me and when I got back to the show he was n't there yet. He did n't come home to sleep. The next morning when the Professor could n't find him he was awful mad. He started right in to talk about people that did n't appreciate nothing

and that could n't be depended upon. It was interesting to hear him talk; and after I had seen what kind of a speech he could make I liked to hear him start up. He orated about ingratitude as good as if there was a whole crowd.

Right in the middle of his goings-on he stopped short. He looked at me. He did n't say another word; he just crooked his finger and motioned me to come to one side. He fixed a board and told me to sit down beside him. He said I looked like a boy that could be depended upon and trusted with a secret.

"How would you like," he says, "to be a human dictionary and make lots of money?"

"Me!" I says. "Why, I don't know half the words in the dictionary."

"Oh, yes, you do. I could teach you that all right. I notice that you can read all the big words on the handbills, and you are pretty smart even if you do look a little slow. I will give you five dollars a week and you can have your transportation and all traveling expenses and be a member of the troupe."

"Well," I says, "I would like that mighty well if I could do it. Maybe you better give me the dictionary and I 'll study it a few weeks and see if I can learn enough to suit you. But it would take me a long time to get it all by heart."

"Pshaw!" he says. "It would n't take a fellow like you more than a day. It only took that long-legged, thin-nosed, nefandous, necromantic, nebulous gander-heels that I picked up and put on his

feet in the world and treated like a high-class curiosity and done everything I could for and then got done dirty for it—it only took him three days."

"'How would you like to be a human dictionary?'"

I felt like a plum' fool. Here I was talking to a man that was so smart he thought everyone else was the same. I was away up out of my own class of folks. I guessed I had better go back to the Missouri and learn the channel. If I ever struck one of them snags in the dictionary it would be all off

with me. And then I thinks to myself there is never no use not to try; if he thinks I am smart enough let him go on till he finds out for himself. I told him I guessed five dollars was a pretty fair offer and if he was going to teach me I was ready for him to start in.

Well, I was surprised. Every leaf in that dictionary was the same. I did n't see how me and everybody had been fooled that way. But I guessed I would take the five dollars a week till everybody in the country found it out. I started right in to study hard on them two pages; but the Professor said it was foolish to go at it like that. And he showed me an easy way to do it.

I kept on and I learned nefandous, which is something that ain't fit to be spoken of, and I learned nefarious and necromantic and nebulous—they was all in the N's—and in a couple of hours I knew that dictionary all by heart. You could open it any place. But you could n't stick me. I wanted to begin performing right that afternoon. But the Professor said I better get good on the numbers.

That afternoon, when everybody had given up their money, the Professor told them how the Human Dictionary was down with a touch of brain fever; but he expected to have him on his feet by night, and they had better come again to see this marvel of the century. And by night I knew it all. Old gray-haired men looked up and wondered. Smart people did n't know what to make of it. They just liked to wonder. It seemed foolish to

me; but when everybody told each other how nature done them things and how great I was—and things more wonderful that they had seen and knew was true—I commenced to feel wonderful myself. I could n't hardly believe it.

We done well at that place and made another stand by the next afternoon. That place was pretty much the same and the next place and the next; I got so used to the show that I knew everything that was coming. Rags did, too; but Rags did n't know they was the same old jokes, so he enjoyed his work all the time. I knew all the Professor's talk, and he said he was the best show barker in the business; and I knew all of Stubbs's jokes, which he said he would n't change for anything because they had been reliable for years, and I knew the numbers of them; what I had learned of the dictionary was n't nothing. Rags got to know so much that when Stubbs would lean up against the center-pole and look solemn and responsible, just before he went out to get off his jokes again, Rags would jump around and bark and yap at him to hurry him up; he liked the tumbling. The Professor said that Rags was a good barker; he made the people think there was a whole dog-show inside.

The Professor gave me my first week's wages at the end of the second week; he said he always had to hold back a week on his performers and keep it in trust for them. Well, when I started to get money for acting I got to thinking whether it was enough money. I seen the Professor about it and told him that Rags was n't getting nothing. I told

him it was n't right for a dog to be performing regular and doing his best and him not getting a cent for it. I said I thought Rags ought to get anyways maybe two dollars a week. The Professor he looked at me a while and did n't say nothing. I thought he was going to lecture about ingratitude again.

"Seven dollars a week," he says. "A DOLLAR a DAY. And board and transportation. There 's no end of expenses."

But he thought a little longer and then said all right; he guessed he could manage it. At the end of the third week he give me both our wages. But the next day he could n't make change and so I had to let him take six dollars and a half back again.

We passed all kinds of boats and some that you could hardly call boats; most anything will do to float down the Mississippi. Sometimes it was a big long raft of logs with three or four men to work the sweeps and a tent to live in like they were camping out on the river; sometimes a big passenger side-wheeler with open-work like lace on her paddle-boxes and scallops on the ends of her stacks and her all togged up like you expect to see a Southern boat in a fancy white dress with only a little of her hull a-showing and kicking her skirts up behind with the smoke streaming away back like she was just skimming the current; and sometimes a tow-boat pushing so much coal before her that you 'd think she was bringing a whole coal mine down from the Ohio; sometimes just a houseboat floating down because it don't cost nothing, and sometimes

a kind of a canal-boat full of crockery from the Muskingum, and sometimes a farmer with a load of farm truck in a big box of new lumber sunk most to its edges, and him sitting on top smoking his pipe and taking his stuff to market a thousand miles away; and sometimes a ferryboat going by horse-power crossways, and sometimes—there 's a lot of them, but I guess a long raft is the boss of the whole bunch because them fellows don't care much. Things is kind of monotonous for them, anyway. And sometimes a big packet wooding up in the night with fifty niggers running back and forth and singing together and the mate a-cussing and the passengers out on the guards a-listening and hardly knowing whether the singing or the cussing is the best.

I seen a farmer's boat that looked like he had a new shed in his back yard with his crops in it and he took a notion to cork up the cracks and float it down the river. I seen a fellow that had a roof on his'n and a hole in the end with a shelf before it, and he would come out like a pigeon and sit on the shelf with his feet hanging over the water; and when he was tired smoking he would go inside. He told us he was from the Cumberland. When them kind gets to New Orleans they sell their truck and pull out the nails. Then they have a little lumber-yard that was n't spoiled at all by being a boat. Why, they ain't boats at all, they ain't even barges; they 're all freight—lumber and farm-stuff coming down together. Then he takes a train or a packet and goes back.

There is a heap more goes down the Mississippi than ever goes up it again, and that sets you a-thinking. On some rivers you think a good deal about the scenery, but when you 're floating down this river you don't think of nothing but the Mississippi. Some ways I hain't treated this river quite fair. But I guess I give it just as much credit as most people do right at the first. I 'll tell you how it is. You see there is the Missouri coming in above St. Louis, and it is more rivers put together than you would take time to count up; and it joins the Upper Mississippi, which brings along a lot of pretty fair rivers; and they take in the Ohio, which is made up of the Monongahela and the Allegheny and takes in the Muskingum and the Little Kanawha and the Great Kanawha and the Big Sandy and the Sciota and the Kentucky and the Wabash and the Cumberland and the Tennessee and others; and there comes in the Arkansas, which is two thousand miles long itself and is only second to the Missouri and takes in more streams than anybody would have patience with; and there comes the Red River, in partners with the Wichita—there ain't no use to tell about the St. Francis and the rest, because when I looked on the map it had me beat. Besides them main ones there is a lot of second-class rivers that go right into the lower Mississippi for themselves, like the Obion and the Hatchee and the Yazoo and the Big Black—the map is wormy with them.

Well, the Mississippi is all them put together. It gets deeper and swifter and widens out sometimes

and gets narrower sometimes; and when you see it you just give it a look and think it is a pretty fair wide river. It does it so easy it fools you. But when you have lived on it and laid around on it with nothing else to do, and when you have seen how it can swallow up a river and not notice it, and when you begin to see how many solid square miles of water is going past every hour, it gets worked into your head and soaked right down into you that this here is the Mississippi. If the Professor owned it he would call it the Consolidated Aggregation of Rivers.

CHAPTER XX

MARY McKAY ON IDIOTS AND OTHERS

AND next thing we done we come across Mary McKay coming down from Kentucky on her flat—her and the idiot. You see when we was working along pretty well toward Memphis—and I wishing every day we would get there—we was delayed at a town because we had to get a license for the Consolidated Aggregation. It was n't no license to pilot; you don't have to get a license for a show-boat, anybody can work the sweep. Of course some ways you are a danger, but seeing you have n't got any power on board you can't make no fool moves and do something unexpected, and that is a good thing for the steamboat pilots. They can watch out for you. But sometimes you do have to get a license to give a show. Well, they don't examine you for that like they do a pilot to find out if you know how to run a show, and if you know a joke when you see one, and if you have got a reliable clown that you can depend

on—it ain't like that. You just pay down your money for the license and they take the risk. Well, that town ought to 'a' had its own license taken away; we could n't get down to doing business. We did n't get the show going till night and so we laid over and give a day show to gather up the leavings. That brought us out into the river again early in the afternoon and that is how we come to be going along forty feet or so away from one of them farmer boats. There was a pretty pert little woman sitting up on it looking at us out of a sunbonnet. She was n't very well dressed but she was neat and trim-built and she had a sassy way without being what you would call sassy. There was a big, slab-sided, flat-footed fellow that minded the sweep and done what she said like she was the captain.

Well, we was going along together as even as if we was just laying next to each other and we got to talking back and forth till we were acquainted. Pretty soon we all took a shine to her because she was pretty sharp in her answers; and when she found we was a show-boat her and him pushed over closer and put a plank out and came aboard, and visited us. She wanted to know whether we made lots of money and how much a Fat Lady got and how much for a Giant. She had n't never been on the insides of a show before but you would n't 'a' knowed it because it did n't faze her none; she seemed to know it was just a way to get money out of folks.

The Fat Lady liked her and wondered that she

was n't afraid to go down the river all alone with only that irresponsible fellow. But she said Josh was more responsible than lots of men that had all their brains; anyway, he would follow a woman's

"Put a plank out and came aboard"

advice when it was given to him and that was how he come to do a lot of more sensible things than men that have their wits. And anyway she said she would n't 'a' been afraid to come down any river alone because her folks was keelboatmen before steamboats ever come. They was Kentuckians in the days when you really had to hold up your end, and she knew how to get along with men folks. Some ways she was pretty forward, but it was n't nothing, because it come natural to her; she was a lady without having to put it on. You could see

she was used to men folks and knew how to take all of them. She told the Fat Lady a woman HAD to be sharper than a man, but she must n't always let on that she is. The Professor soon found out she was pretty sharp; he said she could 'a' dead-headed her way into a show without half trying. I was surprised when I found she could n't read or write. She told me that when I had to read the sign for her. There is some people so smart that you would n't know they were not educated. By the time she was through visiting she had found I did n't really belong to the show but was a steamboater; and she took up with me. I went over and rode with her awhile and I found out all about who she was. And here is who she was:

Josh was her son, but he was n't hers by rights. Her husband was married before and that 's how she come to have an idiot. She come from away up the Kentucky River and most of her kin had lived there. Her husband's kin lived around there, too, but some of them lived up in the Cumberlands. Her husband and her had a patch of land with some hogs and a cow and the idiot; and they all paid pretty well, especially the idiot, which brought them seventy dollars a year from the Government and paid best of all in real money.

In Kentucky you get paid seventy dollars a year for having a idiot and so much for having blindies; but there was n't no blindness in her husband's family; they only had an idiot. You see some States put up big buildings to take care of them kind and they can't get no help without they go and

live there. But where she come from they don't do that; instead of hiring a lot of people to take care of them, and hiring politicians to run them, they give the money to their folks and let them do it theirselves. That way they get took care of at home and nobody has any complaints to make and everybody is satisfied. It is sensibler and the State knows how much it is going to cost. So if you have an idiot you can get the job of taking care of him if you want it.

Well, her husband's kin used the idiot for his board and keep, and his pa drew the money himself; they did n't want him to marry again but he went and married Mary McKay anyhow and took Josh along. And with their patch of land and the idiot's salary they got along pretty fair. He was a lot of help, too, and done more work than her husband; the only trouble with Josh was that when you put him at anything he would n't know when to stop. If you started him to carrying cordwood onto a flatboat he would keep carrying it till he sunk the boat or was all tired out; he would keep right on at a thing till somebody that had sense would tell him not to do it no more. But mostly he was pretty good at that kind of work; he was big and strong.

Well, after a while her husband ups and dies. And he left her everything. His kin wanted the idiot back again and now they thought they ought to have him; but he went to her because now she was his mother. Well, they could n't see it that way; they did n't have a blindy nor nothing and he was really their kin and not hers; and so they

thought they ought to fall into the idiot by rights. But she would n't let them have Josh; she stuck to her own rights by law. She thought a good deal of Josh and she knew they would work him to death and take the money. He was a good willing fellow and she was n't going to see him done wrong by; and you bet she had a mind of her own. Josh was a strong man but he had n't grown up in his mind. He was good-natured and pleased with anything and thought everybody was all right; he was foolish. When he was n't working he would just as leave play marbles with a little boy; he was awful good with children.

Well, they pestered her and made it so miserable that she made up her mind to go away with him; she had always wanted to travel and see the world anyway. Her husband had been building a flat to take truck to New Orleans, so she put on the stuff and decided to take it herself. She had n't never been down the Mississippi so far but she liked traveling and seeing the different kinds of folks; she reckoned she took it after her grandfather that was a keelboat man.

You see her grandfather was one of them men that was on freight boats in place of engines before steam was invented. And they was the biggest and powerfulest and fightingest men that ever was; they had to be. A keelboat was pretty big and something like a canal-boat and pointed at both ends. There was from seven to ten men on each side to pole it up-stream—fifteen or twenty men all together. There was a row of boards laid along the

sides of the boat from end to end and them was called the walks. The men would go to the end of the boat that was up-stream and turn their backs to it and set their poles on bottom and start to walk. Of course they would n't go anywheres themselves because the poles was on bottom—but the boat would move up under them and that way they walked it against the current. Them men would push a load of freight up river a thousand or fifteen hundred miles, and sometimes two thousand miles from New Orleans to Pittsburgh. And they would have to work steady from four to five months to get one load up. But there was hundreds and hundreds of keelboats.

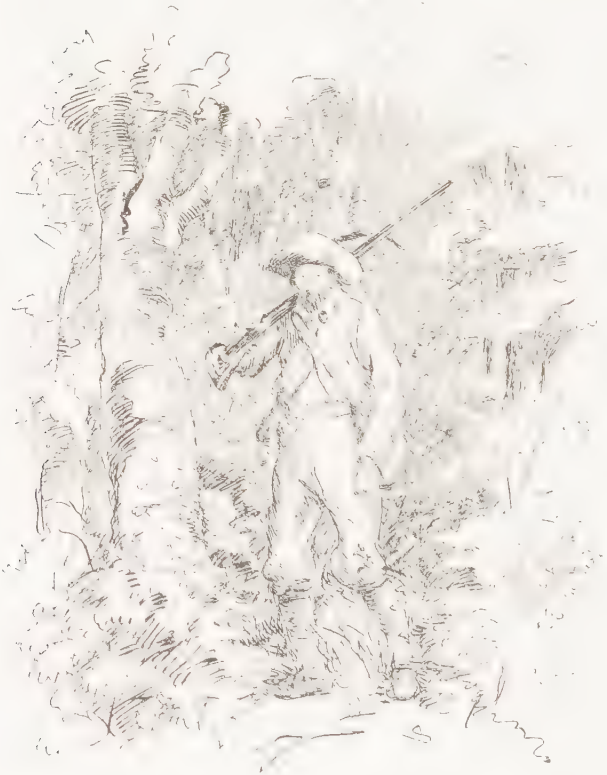
Well, I 'll tell you how them men was. In these days, when a boat lays at a landing and the fire keeps on making steam in the boilers it has got to blow off or something is going to happen. Same way with them men which was engines in them days. From doing that kind of work and growing strong in the arms with great big muscles on their chests they had a feeling that nothing could get the best of them; there was n't a chute that could push them back nor a rapids that could slew them around nor a current they could n't walk the boat against nor a man they could n't whip; they could feel it right inside of themselves. When a lot of them was in camp and had been laying still too long and got to feeling that way, you could get up a fight easy. All anybody had to do was to jump up and crack his heels together and he would mighty soon find somebody that would like to accommodate him.

Then you would see some tall fighting. Sometimes a whole crew would tackle another crew, equal numbers and fair and square, and they would have a fight to the finish just for the fun of it; and you bet they fought in earnest. But they always fought equal numbers; they would n't even help out their own side—they was fair and square. On the boat they was engines and ashore they was fighters. Hundreds of them boats used to be at Natchez-under-the-hill, and down there under the bluffs there use to be warm times. But they would n't bother other folks or do things to show off at all. Fighting was just their safety-valves. And when they did n't have a pole at their shoulders it was mostly the butt of a rifle. They did n't know about shot-guns; they would only need to hit a thing in one place and they would pick out the place. They was big and strong. Well, they had to be.

Mary McKay's grandfather was one of them. She said the women folks in her family was small and active like her, but they had big men. And when her grandfather got his money at Natchez, which was the paying-off place, and took a notion to come home, he would walk with his rifle over the Natchez and Nashville trace and up to the Kentucky River. When white men tramped out a trail like that it was called a trace, because that was how they traced their way home.

Her family remembered back to the earthquakes at New Madrid; people felt them hundreds of miles away. It was just at the tail end of 1811 and it kept up most three months whenever it felt like it,

so that it lapped over onto 1812. And it was right at the same time that the first steamboat happened



"Over the Natchez and Nashville trace"

on the Ohio and Mississippi. They built it at Pittsburgh. Fulton done it the same as he had

done it down East, and it was a wonder; and Captain Roosevelt he was the captain of it. It was mighty funny how the earth started to blow up her boilers just when the first steamboat come up there to get coal. They built another and another right away and one of them made a trip in twenty-five days that had always taken five or six months. And they kept right on building them. And right from that time the keelboat men began to go out of style and the engines were taking their jobs.

But the people was n't through using them fellows yet; just then there broke out a war and fighting was right in their line. It was a war with them English again. Well, we did pretty fair on the ocean but we did n't make out very good on land. It seemed they could do just what they wanted with us for a long time. It dragged along a couple of years and then there was 12,000 of them getting ready to take New Orleans. Andy Jackson he had about only 6,000 men to make them keep back. The English general did n't think they would amount to much; he did n't know about them riflemen from Tennessee and Kentucky. His men were soldiers that knew about battles, and we was just jayhawks and greenhorns that had been picked up everywhere and did n't know nothing about war. And there was n't half enough of us, neither. Well, the English got in line and come right on. Andy Jackson he turned loose his cannons. But them English don't mind that; they are used to it. They come right along. And when they got a little closer they

all started to drop dead. Them long-rifle fellows could take a general off his horse a lot easier than barking a squirrel off 'n a tree; and they kept a-doing it. Every time a rifle went off there was a bullet in a soldier. After they found what they had run into they turned around and run the other way; it was a different kind of greenhorns than they was used to. That was about the end of the war. And when it was over the men went back home again, all except the seven that was killed. And there was six hurt some, too. They had killed seven hundred soldiers and wounded over a thousand—about seventeen hundred altogether. That was mighty good shooting. Well, they was building steamboats swift then—and that was about all of keelboat men.

Mary McKay had a pig that would follow her all around. But she had to sell it. She had a cow that come fresh that spring, too, and she was awful disappointed because it was the wrong kind of a calf; she wanted to raise it up to be a cow. But the way it turned out she rented her place till she would want to come back; and so it did n't make no difference after all. I asked her what she was going to do at New Orleans and she said she was going right back to Kentucky again; she would n't leave the Kentucky River. She said that on that river there is about thirty miles where the bluffs are straight up hundreds of feet on each side and so near together you can throw a stone across the top; and everybody says it is the beautifullest river in the world. But up where her place was it was

all green pastures and rolling land and that is the beautifullest country in the world. And what would anybody ever leave that for? So when she sold her flat and looked at New Orleans she was going back there again; and then she would like to see them try to get Josh away or impose on her. I bet they would come out of the little end of the horn; she was able to take care of herself.

Late that afternoon I had to put the board across and get back on our boat again because there was Memphis. There was the post-office on the bluff, and there was the ferry-boat with one stack crooked like it had a leaning toward Arkansaw; and there was the railroad tracks. Well, I would rather have staid on her flat and gone to New Orleans with her if it was n't that I was getting wages for being part of the show; I liked her. She could tell you more interesting things than a school-teacher, only she could n't read and write. But we had to get to work and turn in to Memphis. And Mary McKay went floating on.

CHAPTER XXI

BUSTING INTO TENNESSEE

IT was getting dark when we shoved in at Memphis and found a place for ourselves at a wharf-boat where the railroad tracks ran along the levee. There was a packet laying just above us with the lights lit in her cabin and the smoke floating lazy out of her stacks and there was an engine pulling away from a coal-shoot where it had just been filled up. Before long a man come and stood at the edge of the boat and began to show his authority, wanting to know what license we had to come along there and take up space inside the Tennessee line that maybe steamboats would need. Him and the Professor argued back and forth and the man did n't like to have his authority questioned like that. When the talk was getting pretty warm there come along an Irishman dragging a shovel behind him. He stood and listened awhile and then he chipped in.

"Don't ye be talkin' back to Jenkins," he says.

"If ye do he 'll be makin' ye move out into th' United States agin. Th' Gover'mint is sixty-five feet out from shore an' ye 're inside av his beat on th' wather."

Then it come out that it was the wharf-master that the Professor had been sassing back to. And now he wanted to know if we had whiskey on board and if we had a license. And the Professor said no; we was a show. And then the Irishman chips in again.

"Jenkins," he says, "let 's th' both av us go on an' find out. I doubt th' wan or th' other av us wud know whishkey if we wint at it th' right way."

So the wharf-master come aboard of us with the Irishman dragging his shovel behind him; and they looked over all the freaks. The Irishman stood and looked at the Fat Lady with his little soft hat in his hand. And then he turned to the wharf-master.

"Jenkins," he says, "I see no harm in this. Ther is nobody here that is agin th' law."

The Professor seen how things was going and he took a different way about.

"Sit down, gents," he says. "We 're just a little tired rowing this scow in; and if it does n't make any difference to you, we won't be in a hurry."

"Sit down, Jenkins, an' have a shmoke; ye might as well take yer time about it," says the Irishman, pointing Jenkins to a place beside him.

But Jenkins was kicking his toe against the boxes and trunks like he thought they was suspicious, and

he did n't make any answer at all. You see he had been showing his authority and been talked back to and contradicted in a way that he was n't going to turn round and change his mind all of a sudden and give in as easy as that. He turned on his heel and went away.

"Where has that fellow gone to now?" says the Professor to the Irishman.

"He has gone up to th' other wharf-boat. Mabby he has gone to find out something."

"Have you got charge of the boats, too?" says the Professor.

"Me!" said the Irishman. "I have charge av th' locomotives. 'T is me that pits th' sand intil thim. 'T is that way they hould their grip on th' rails f'r to shtart an' shtop. 'T is little they 'd be needin' sand on a boat, wid all 't is a mighty slippery river. Have ye only just yerselves?"

"Just ourselves and our outfit. We 're going to pitch the tent somewhere to-morrow."

"Well, if that is all, mabby Jenkins wud let ye stay here jist f'r th' night if ye 'd go at him right. What have ye in th' boxes? Have ye anny stuffed mummies or th' likes?"

"We have only living curiosities," said the Professor. And he gave the Irishman a handbill. The Irishman struck a match and lit a short pipe. And then he used the rest of the match to read the handbill, till it went out.

"Have ye no shtrong man in yer show?"

"No, we have n't any strong man."

"Well, now, 't is too bad a show wud not have

that. 'T is that plazes th' byes. I doubt if ye had come across th' likes av Bill in th' days whin he was thravelin' around he 'd 'a' been th' bye f'r ye. Wud he lift th' anvils an' toss around th' heavy weights in a show th' way he does whin he 's workin' he could make their eyes stick out for thim."

"Where is this fellow? Is he at liberty?"

"Yis. He is at liberty now. He is at liberty to

"'Have ye no shtrong man in yer show?'"

stay at home—which he was n't whin he was thravelin' around."

"Who was he traveling with? Who is he?"

"Well, now," said the Irishman, tamping down the tobacco in his pipe, "th' answer to that question wud be a long shtory. And then I cud only shkim th' cream off av it. There was a blacksmith doin' some work on a ship in New Orleans. He was th' handy bye wid th' tools; he cud make annything out av annything. There was a bos'n on th' boat nixt dure that med frinds wid him be way av takin' a drink now and again. Th' bos'n was a good felly excipt whin th' whiskey was workin' in him; an' wan rainy day whin he was feelin' that way he come over an' took a swipe at th' blacksmith. An' Bill, that was th' handy bye, started in f'r to make a corpse av him wid a cotton hook. Whin th' bos'n seen what he had tackled he turned an' run f'r to save his life in the gallows av th' ship. An' Bill afther him wid th' cotton hook makin' jabs f'r his coat-tails. An' just as the blacksmith was comin' to th' gallows—as luck wud have it—"

Just as the Irishman got to that part of the story, and I was listening and Stubbs was listening and everybody was listening, there come the scream of a locomotive up the tracks and a headlight flashed in sight. At that the Irishman jumped up and grabbed his shovel.

"Good-bye to all av ye—'t is Number Sivin and I have me work to do." And he went hurrying away with the shovel on his shoulder. I was awful

sorry the locomotive come then; I would 'a' liked to hear what it was that happened.

Right after he was gone the wharf-master come again. "Go on now; git out of here. Did n't I tell you once to move on?" he says. And he would n't let the Professor argue back to him at all; I guess he did n't like his way at the beginning.

So we had to let loose and push out onto the dark water again.

Then the current took right hold of us and carried us away into the night. Away over to the right was the Arkansaw woods, looking dismaler than anything, with only the light of a cabin peeking out of the darkness here and there; and on the left was the lights of the city sprinkled all along but not lighting things up much; they was mostly hid by the high bank. The river was spread out awful wide between, and off ahead you could hardly tell where it left off; it just emptied into the night. The Fat Lady was sitting disgusted in her chair and telling her friend the Giant how she never expected to be ever traveling with such a disgraceful outcast show as this; the Professor he walked up and down and cussed and the stars was all twinkling in the sky. But there was only a thin edge of moon and the stars did n't do much good. We had floated in the night before but now it did n't seem the same. This was like us and our home had been kicked out of the world. We was just drifting along on the United States water which did n't belong to nobody. The Professor's wife was scolding him and pointing

out his mistakes and telling him he did n't have no tact or judgment to talk like he did in the first place, and he told her to "Aw, shut up!" and then the Fat Lady acted dignified at the goings-on and made noise with her tongue like clucking a chicken, which the Professor's wife heard it and asked her would she kindly concern herself with her own affairs. The three men of the troupe were standing at the back of the scow and pretending to be interested in the sweep; they did n't want to get mixed up in it. The only one that did n't care was Rags.

Pretty soon a big side-wheeler hove in sight and come walking right up river with a beam of light ahead and an open furnace glaring to one side of her bows. She let out a deep hoarse whistle like she was growling at us because we had been in her place; and then Stubbs waved the lantern to make sure that the pilot would see us. I guess he did because she passed by all right; but it looked like she did n't notice us at first. In a little while we started to wallow in her wash and that made them two shut up a while.

Stubbs had been watching the shore close and now he told the Professor that we was passing a part of the town called Fort Pickering and that it was the best place of all to give a show.

"Is there a place we could get to pitch the tent?"

"Best place in town," says Stubbs. "There is a vacant piece of ground where the fort used to be, and it 's built up and settled all around. Beestly Brothers' show done good there; it 's a fine suburbs. It 's all vacant except the powder-hole in the

middle; that 's all that 's left of the fort. We 'd find that handy, too. It 's like a dug-out on flat ground with the earth heaped up in a mound over it; and you go down into it through a door like a cellar. If Madame Albion and Gulliver don't care to be left here on the boat while we 're hauling the stuff and looping-up, they can go right along on the first load and stay in the powder-hole till we 've put up the round-top."

At that the Fat Lady put her nose up in the air and said she was n't going to do no underground snooping for this here show. She said she had done a lots for shows that did n't have no accommodations; but when it come to being buried underground so people could n't see her it was the limit, and enough is about enough. Stubbs he apologized and said it was only a sejestion of his and no offense intended. So she gave her cheeks another touch with her powder cloth and put on her dignity for keeps.

The Professor said that if Stubbs knew the coast along these parts he would leave it all to him. Then we all got busy rowing in. Pretty soon it was easy water where it did n't take us along so fast, and with us rowing the old ark sideways we kept slanting in fast enough to strike it all right, so Stubbs said. And the next thing that scow done was to come to a standstill right out in the water. And she would n't budge; she had poked her nose in a mud-bank which you could n't see. Shore was so far away yet that we could n't 'a' got to it without a row-boat. We pushed and rowed and sweat—it was a hot night—but she was stuck. Then the Pro-

fessor was mad, sure enough. He stood on the edge of the scow and looked over the shore and run down the whole State of Tennessee, and he said by the great jumpin' Geehossafat he was a-going to break into that State somewheres before he got done.

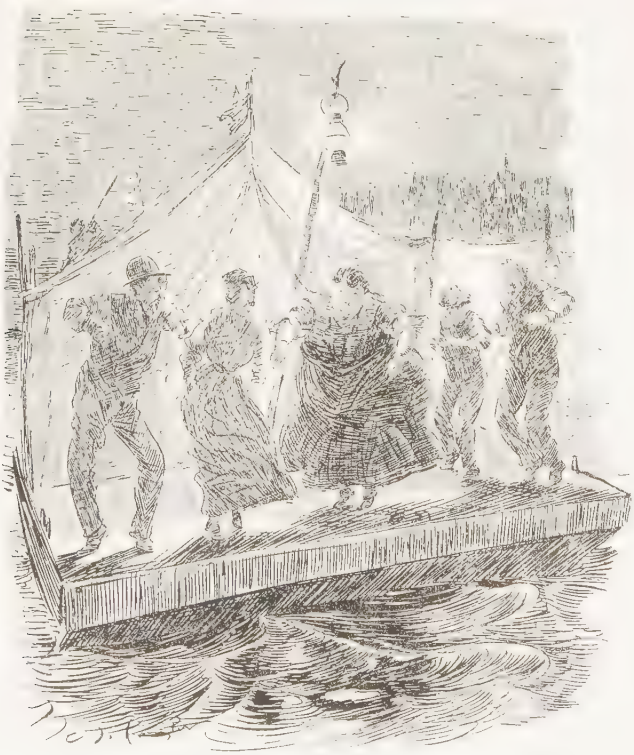
Stubbs took soundings with the pole all around and he said it was only the front end that was n't floating and he judged it was a kind of a bluff mud-bank which we could maybe get her off. Him and the Giant each took a pole; and while we shifted some of the load to the back they kept pushing so that the current could n't push us farther on when the front end raised. It was slow water there, which was a good thing. Then me and the Professor and his wife and the Tattooed Man stood on the end that was n't on bottom and teetered up and down to bring her loose. But she would n't come. We was stuck on that mud-bank.

The Fat Lady just sat in her chair and did n't do nothing. Then we all seen that it was her weight sitting where she was that was helping to hold the scow on bottom.

"Madam," says the Professor mighty stern, 'why do you not come back here where she is floating and do your part. Do you expect them men to push your weight off?"

The Fat Lady looked pretty huffy and I thought she was n't going to help us at first; but she come back and stood in line and when we jiggled up and down she done it with us. And you bet when she jiggled something had to come; we made waves that would 'a' rocked a skiff. On a boat when you

take five hundred pounds off of one end and put it on the other it makes a thousand pounds difference, which is half a ton, and you bet that counts, specially when she jumped up and down. Stubbs got one corner backed off and then the current come against us sideways and swung us free and we

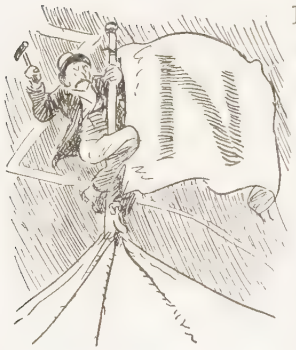


"When she jiggled some thing had to come"

went drifting on again t'-other-end-to. Then the Fat Lady took her place in her chair again and got out her fan and heaved a big sigh. I was awful glad to see the Fat Lady away from that edge; I was afraid she might lose her balance and go overboard. If she had fell in we could n't 'a' never pulled her on again. I bet her wash would 'a' sunk the scow. But she was handier on her feet than you would 'a' thought. Next time we tried to make shore we got right up to it without grounding. Then Stubbs jumped to land and drove some of the tent-stakes and made her fast; and we was tied alongside of Tennessee at last.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW THE PROFESSOR HELD THE FORT



NEXT morning we had to get a wagon to haul the show up to the grounds. The Professor had the Fat Lady go up on the first load because that was the canvas which she could sit on and draw it up around her. Well, when we come to get up to the grounds we found that the Fat Lady could n't go into the Fort Pickering powder-hole because it was rain water inside; there was just the cellar door in the humped-up dirt and they was starting to make town lots of the place. The Fat Lady did n't have no place to hide herself, so she had to go back with the wagon to wait on the boat. She sat in the middle of it with some canvas around her and her head sticking out and finding fault with things all the way; she was getting awful disgusted.

After the men had got the center-pole up and tightened the main guy I had to help to do the looping-up because I was good at that and it is lots

of work. You see the top of a big tent is all cut like pieces of pie and at every town you 've got to fasten it all together like sewing or lacing, but it ain't either of them; it is just looping-up. It ain't like sewing because you don't have to rip it apart, and it ain't like lacing because you don't have to unlace it. There is just little loops of rope all along the edges of each piece of canvas; and all you have to do is to start at the beginning and take a loop on the edge of one piece of canvas and put it through the loop on the other piece and put the next loop through that and the next loop through that and keep on till you have got to the end. Then you fasten the last loop tight so that it can't ever start to come apart. You keep unrolling your canvas, like pieces of pie all around the center-pole, till it is all put together on the ground and fastened at the middle to the big ring that slides up and down the pole. Then you can h'ist it up. After the show you just unfasten the end loops and give it a shake and it all falls apart and you roll it in a bundle and throw it onto the wagon and start to the next town right away. It is just circus sewing, which is temporary and a fraud. But it would be nice if they would sew a fellow's clothes that way, specially all summer. All you would have to do would be to pull a loop and dive right in. I bet there would be lots of improvements if everybody knew everybody else's trade.

That part of town was just like Stubbs said it was; it was a nice suburbs on good high land a little back from the river-banks, which was called

the Chickasaw bluffs. There was nice cottages all along shady streets and they called it all Fort Pickering. But the real place, which most people did n't seem to know was Fort Pickering at all, was just a big vacant lot. All that was left of the fort was three timbers that held open the mouth of the powder-hole; the Professor took some old logs to build up his ticket stand and lecturing platform. The grass had n't sprung up where they had scraped the ground and we pitched our tent on the dirt; it made it seem circusy. There was houses all around, some old and some new. There was one big frame house too old to be painted; but you would n't want it painted because it was all dark and had flowery vines running up it. There was a man leaning on the picket fence smoking a pipe comfortable and watching the tent go up. On the corner of our vacant place was two new houses which it was n't time to paint yet; they was just starting to build on the town lots.

Farther back from the river I come across a place that was all nigger shanties set around any ways at all—just one-room shacks with stovepipes or anything for chimneys. There was some nigger mammies talking to each other and little pickaninnies running around. Well, I thinks to myself, "This ain't no good place for advertising and I will have to find a better one." I got to talking to a fine, big, well-dressed lady that had come to see a nigger mammy. She was complaining to the nigger mammy because she could n't get anybody to come and live in her house, and work for her; they all

wanted to come home to this place nights. The nigger mammy, which was a little yellow nigger mammy, said she would n't work except she could just carry the key to the kitchen and come and unlock the house in the morning and go to work. She said she could n't bear to be away from home. And the white lady, which was a Kentucky lady, said she could n't understand the notions they all had. She did n't seem to be able to get anybody she could depend on. She was a nice lady and she talked kind to me and told me how to find my way. And I gave her a bill for it.

I rambled around and got onto a road which did n't seem to be going nowheres and a fellow told me it went away out to a burying grounds where there was fourteen thousand northern people buried. Well, there was n't no use taking bills that direction, so I went somewheres else. After a while I come to a road that went away off to some other State; a boy told me that some people took that road the time they was trying to get away from yellow fever. Just as I was turning back I seen a man come tearing down the road on horseback like he was running a race to town. It was a fine black horse which looked like he could race and the man was riding him bareback and waving his hat; they was just going it. When the man come to me he pulled the horse up all of a sudden.

"I come within one of it," he says, and he waved a ticket in his hand. "Just one from the capital prize," and he looked at me like he knew I must be awful surprised and interested. And

just to prove it he told all the thousands and hundreds that was the capital prize. And his was just one more. I told him that was pretty good and I bet it was closer guessing than most people done and I handed him up a bill. Then he turned loose his horse, which had been dancing before me all the time, and they went off with my bill like it was an important message to town. Well, I thinks to myself, "Everybody will be surprised and interested and count up how much it would 'a' been if he had got the big prize; and to-morrow he will wish he never come within one of anything." Pretty near getting a thing ain't no good at all; I already found that out.

On the way back to town I seen a sister of charity stopping in the gate of her big brick building—she had a quarter which the man had stopped and give to her because he pretty near won—and she was talking to a man that wanted something to do for something to eat. She said he could chop a little kindling in the basement and she would give him a nice dinner. I gave her a bill and I give him a bill. And then I kept on towards the river again.

When I was through town I had only a small bunch left, so I turned down river toward the show. Just as I come to a blacksmith shop I only had two left, so I stopped and looked in awhile. I like to look into a blacksmith shop when the anvils are ringing like bells and everybody is working away.

I stood in the door and let the sun shine warm

on my back and looked at the fires blazing up in the shade and the iron coming out soft and all ready to bend and spread like it was iron dough; and they would work it with hammers into the shape it was always going to be. And when it was done they soused it into a tub and it was regular iron that would n't bend for nobody; it is a good thing that iron is that way. And pretty soon the blacksmith put on his coat and says, "Come on; the girls will be waiting dinner for us."

Well, I did n't have any idea it was that late; here I had been standing and forgetting all about the show. I gave the blacksmith a bill and I gave the lame fellow a bill; then I took to my heels and made tracks back to the Consolidated Aggregation.

When I got back there was people all around the tent, white folks and black folks and pickaninnies with bow legs and bumpy heads; and a crowd of them had their eyes all on the big painting. An old mammy was selling molasses pop-corn and somebody had started up pink lemonade; it was a bright sunny day with a little breeze a-blowing and moving the picture of the snake charmer. When a breeze made it go wavy like that it looked like the snake was alive and crawling up the lady; it was the realest picture I have ever seen. Everybody liked it.

When I went inside our people was all standing round and waiting till it would be time to start up. There was a boy with his eye to a crack in the tent a-wishing he could come in, and the Fat Lady had her nose to a slit taking a peek at the outside and

The Circus

wishing she could go out. She was complaining that she could never go and enjoy the fine weather. She had traveled all over the known world and been seen by everybody, but she had n't never seen nothing of them places on accounts of having to live so private. Stubbs he had himself all whited up with a big smile marked out on his face and him looking solemn. As soon as the Circassian Princess had her hair on right she took hold of the drumstick and we started up the music. Then Stubbs stretched himself and done a couple of movements to get himself limbered up and went flipflapping out of the door. He give an extra big show outside and done everything he could to make it seem circusy. Then the Professor pranced out and slammed the money-box on the board and started in.

He had n't hardly got started when it began to sprinkle. Some of them which had seen the free show started to leak away from the edges of the crowd and when the Professor seen that he tore loose with more wonderful talk than I ever heard before. There come a low growl of thunder off in the distance, and right there the Professor roared louder and worked in bigger words. I could see he was going to have a hard time to run opposition to the thunderstorm; but every time it thundered nearer and sprinkled a little he went it one better. And when it rumbled again he come right down to it and told them all about our troupe of grand free concert and premier jubilee minstrel singers—all free of charge and without additional cost price or remuneration. It was all a question of his holding

them till the rain come and getting them in when it did. Just when the right time come he ended with a grand sweat and slammed down a peck of money for change and told them not to crowd and jam but just to follow the ropes and have their change ready and keep a-moving. And nobody moved. Then there come a dash of rain. All them that was thinking about it made up their minds at the same time and moved forward to get under shelter, and I guess that must have influenced a lot of others; anyway he got a bigger crowd than if it was fine weather. I give the organ to the nigger fellow that Stubbs had brought in and got onto my platform. But I could n't see how the Professor was going to give a minstrel show. We did n't have none.

The Professor gave his long lectures about the different curiosities, one after another, and he made them longer than usual; I could see he was taking up the time. It was raining pretty fair now. It leaked through the tent some but not enough to matter. But it come in steady through the hole at the top where the pole went through. It kept running down the pole till it was standing in a little mud-puddle of its own. When the Professor had lectured about how wonderful I was and was getting started on the Fat Lady he turned and whispered to me. He said for me to go and ask Stubbs whether he was most ready for the Minstrels. When I got back to the little dressing place Stubbs was all changed. He had on an old suit turned inside out with the colored lining showing

and his face was blacked up with the cork I had seen him burning in Cairo. He told me to tell the Professor he was ready but he 'd be blamed if he could be a whole minstrel show. And he said to tell the Professor that the best he could do would be a song that ought to fetch them in Tennessee—it was

"He 'd be blamed if he could be a whole minstrel show"

horsey—but that was all he would be responsible for, and the Professor could get out of this minstrel business himself.

That did n't faze the Professor none. He just announced the Minstrels and made everybody step to one side while he dragged out a platform for dancing on. Then Stubbs come walking out nigger-fashion and acting loose-jointed, like an old-time

darkey; you would n't 'a' knowed it was him. He done a lot of jigging and breakdown dancing; then he opened his mouth, which he had made it look bigger at the corners, and started to sing.

"De Camptown ladies sing dis song, Doo dah! doo dah!
De Camptown racetrack five miles long, Oh, doo dah day!
I come down heah wid my hat caved in, Doo dah! doo dah!
I go back home wid a pocket full of tin, Oh, doo dah day!
Gwine to run all night; gwine to run all day,
I 'll bet my money on de bobtail nag,
Somebody bet on de bay."

(Some handclapping. And the rain was coming down harder and leaking through.)

"De long-tail filly and de big black hoss, Doo dah! doo dah!
Dey fly de track and dey both cut across, Oh, doo dah day!
De blind hoss sticken in a big mud hole, Doo dah! doo dah!
Can't touch bottom wid a ten-foot pole, Oh, doo dah day!"

(Lots of more handclapping. When Stubbs was singing that last part he pointed to the pole standing in the mud-puddle and everybody seen the joke and laughed. The wind was blowing considerable outside.)

"Ol' muley cow come on de track, Doo dah! doo dah!
De bobtail fling her ober his back, Oh, doo dah day!
Den fly along like a railroad car, Doo dah! doo dah!
Runnin' a race wid a shootin' star, Oh, doo dah day!"

(The wind was getting kind of worse. It come in under the edge of the top and bulged it up some.)

"See dem flyin' on a ten-mile heat, Doo dah! doo dah!
Round de race track, den repeat, Oh, doo dah day!
I win my money on de bobtail nag, Doo dah! doo dah!
I keep my money in an ol' tow bag, Oh, doo dah day!
Gwine to run all night; gwine to run all day;
I 'll bet my money on de bobtail nag,
Somebody bet on de bay."

The wind was coming harder under the edge of the top and bulging it up pretty stiff and just then the center-pole lifted about six inches out of its mud-puddle and come down into it again like a pile-driver into a duck-pond and threw mud in all directions; it went all over folks. Next jump it went up about a foot and come down and stomped. mud in all directions again; them that had been missed the first shot got it this time. There was a riproaring peal of thunder and the wind was coming in a blast. Some of the people started to get out from under as quick as they could, and they did n't go by the door; they lifted the sides and crawled under. When the canvas was lifted it let the wind in under us full force and filled us up. And then the pole started to act as if it thought it was down on the program for a jig; it done a one-

legged dance in the mud-puddle and threw mud on them all the time they was getting out. I got some splatted on my face and the Fat Lady looked like

"Next jump it went up about a foot"

she had been out when it was raining mud; she got more on accounts of being big. Stubbs stopped being a darkey mighty quick. Him and the Professor went to work to haul the top down. It was

pretty slow about coming down; we all got hold of it and got it settled down inside. Then instead of being a peak sticking up it was just the other way; but now there was n't anything for the wind to catch except the walls and they was staked pretty solid. The pole did n't jump any now; it was just standing up like a mast by itself. We did n't have no place to run to so we staid under cover next to the walls. The tops of the tent was right down to the puddle in the middle but there was room for us all around the sides.

Then it started to rain dogs and cats. And all that came down on our top run out of the hole in the middle; it was like a big funnel catching the whole rainstorm and pouring it at the bottom of the pole, I guess if lightning had struck that pole we would have gathered in most of the whole business. You would n't believe how much rain falls on a space like that unless you seen it spouting into us. It made little streams than ran in all directions and the Fat Lady, which had her dress gathered up, was busy trying to step around on dry places. But she did n't complain any now. She did n't say nothing at all. You 'd 'a' thought she would, too.

After a while the rain and wind started to let up some. There was too much of it to last long. The thunder was rolling away off in the distance where it was going to some other town; and in a little while longer it was just sprinkling. Stubbs waded in under the heavy canvas and found the end of the pulley-rope and hoisted the top up again to dry. They got the wagon and sent the ladies back to the old ark so they could get dry too. The storm was

all over and it was fresh and green outside, with the leaves all raindroppy and new smells coming out on the air from everywheres. Once I smelled a magnolia tree—or maybe it was the blossoms on the vines across the road; everything was freshened up and taking a breath of itself. It was lots of fun, that performance, I would n't 'a' missed it; but the best of it was the way the pole started in to be the rest of the minstrel show. You 'd thought it was a trained pole.

I looked over the whole crowd that come and I did n't see nobody at all that I gave bills to. Stubbs he said he seen some that he give them to. Sometimes I most thought it did n't do no good to give bills around except just to advertise. I guess it was good that way.

We could n't do much that night; everybody had enough of shows. It was squashy on the grass and inside it was nothing but tracky mud; the Professor said that if he had a dime for every footprint in the tent he would n't ask no more of Tennessee. He lit up the burners and tried to get a crowd to believe what he had to say but it would n't work; so he hit his fist on the board like he was knocking the show down to the highest bidder and we pulled up stakes and struck the tent. Our tent was intended for a one-ring circus; it was about three sizes too big for us but the Professor said that did n't make no difference except it was an advantage. We ought to 'a' staid longer in a big place like that, but we could n't; we was a fraud. When we had the tent loaded on we pulled up the stakes of the boat and left ourselves to the river again.

CHAPTER XXIII

SAM EXPLAINS THE DRIFT OF IT

IT was n't more than an hour or two till we passed the line and got shook of Tennessee. And the next morning it was Mississippi along that shore. But it was Arkansaw yet on the other side—same low-down Arkansaw full of woods. The river here was about a mile wide, sometimes more and usually less—maybe a mile and a half at a bend, and then only two-thirds of a mile. It 's just as wide away north on the upper Mississippi; the river won't widen out much no matter how many rivers it takes in. It just gets deeper and swifter and is mad and muddy. But in spring it gets to be thirty miles wide—that is, if you can count it for the river when it is running through people's woods where it don't belong. People live in them Arkansaw woods when the river don't need the space. I seen cabins up on stilts on accounts of that. You see in the spring, when there is more water going south than it can manage, the river puts water

ashore wherever there is a chance until there is room for it all to go down the channel.

Well, that next day I laid on my back a-floating along and I got to thinking about that tent. The pilot of the Woodland he told me that the watershed of the Mississippi had about a million and a half square miles. And all the rain and all the melted snow and everything that gets to be water comes here to the middle and the Mississippi has got to handle it.

When I thought of all the water our tent shed out of its middle I tried to multiply it up into a million and a half square miles; but I could n't do it.

Then I come down and just tried to think how it would 'a' been if our tent was a mountain; and I did n't make out on that. Well, anyways, if you had seen what I did, and how the water was coming out at the foot of the pole, you would mighty soon see that the Mississippi has got to get busy in the springtime. A whole countryful of States is shedding down into it.

But the water don't overflow Memphis, because that is on the fourth Chickasaw bluff—I seen the first one about sixty miles above and the others between, but I did n't say nothing because we would n't think to notice them up on the Missouri. They 're just dirt banks and not very high. Up on the Missouri we would n't name them, but here they 've got them named and numbered because it is about the best they can do in all them hundreds of miles.

The first one was where Fort Pillow was; that 's

where the Southerners beat them so bad that the white soldiers and niggers was driven right over into the river, and people called it a massacre. It was just a bluff dirt bank about as high as a steamboat. It was all red dirt and when I found there was a fort there once it looked kind of bloody dirt to me. But I guess I would n't 'a' thought to say anything about them bluffs if I had n't seen Memphis on the last one and come to think how lucky it was that the river could n't get up that high. They was good to put a town on—or a fort like Pillow or Pickering. Most of the river all the way is like the low-down Arkansaw woods. And when the built-up levee breaks, the river flows down onto the land.

But what I started to think about was our tent. If anybody had seen the water coming out of the center hole and then thought up a tent with a million and a half square miles on it and rainstorms and melting mountains running down to the middle he would n't wonder that the Mississippi has got to jump its banks sometimes and go for help. Why, it runs all over.

We passed a little town that afternoon which the Professor took a look at and decided it did n't suit him. There was a good lumber town waiting a little farther down and he was anxious to get its money. We done all right there and next we struck a town which did n't pan out; and then we found out what was the matter. It had been struck by a medicine show two days before. There was a plug-hat doctor which give a show free and sold medicine that would cure most anything; and with every

bottle of it you got a real genuine Alabama silk handkerchief—which is cotton—and a little hunk of everlasting ambergrease, which is tallow with some cologne in it. And that fetched them strong and took their money so that the place would n't be good and ready for a show until it had a month or so to get over it. The Professor was pretty mad to have his town cut into like that; he told us how he was losing money and called our particular attention to it.

After we passed the Arkansaw we did n't strike the towns so often for a while; and before long we was passing islands down into the eighties—they give up naming them long ago. I guess they needed all the names for the bends; we was floating round bends all the time this way and that—Rowdy Bend and Miller's Bend and Bachelor's Bend and such. Just between Bachelor's Bend and Shirt-tail Bend we commenced to do good because the hands was getting money for picking cotton. It was along in September now and cotton picking was getting started up busy there; there was plantations all along and the big fields was all busted out into snowballs. There was enough of it around that bend to 'a' made a million shirt-tails, I bet. The pickers was busy with the big bags tied round theirselves and them going it with both hands; there was nigger mammies with red and yellow bandanas and black faces in the white cotton, and there was big buck niggers and old men with gray whiskers and little pickaninnies all a-picking it; they was all sailing in and leaving the leafy bushes behind. And some-

times there was an overseer with scales to weigh how much each of them brought and marking it down on their account. Little niggers can do it, too, and get it marked down on the family account, only they don't stick to business quite so steady.

The Professor said the good times would be going right along steady now for three months. You see when you 've gone through a cotton field and picked all the cotton you come to you 've got to start right in and do it again. And then you 've got to do it again. And even when the frost has killed the leaves and you only leave bare, twiggy bushes behind it keeps busting out. So you see they can't get their money all at once and spend it; we could poke along for the next three months and be right on time at every place.

It 's a good thing for shows that cotton does that way—specially scow shows.

The way things was coming now the Professor made more towns; he was picking every little bush. Sometimes we would come in right after that medicine show and the Professor was getting madder about being interfered with like that. Sometimes we would see lots of new red and yellow bandannas, which I guess was the real Alabama silk. The islands run up to one hundred in no time and we was working right along closer to Vicksburg. We done lots of things, mostly the same, that would make anybody tired to tell it; I got tired of it myself.

The Professor he did n't pay up regular and the curiosities was always asking for some of their

money. He said he would like to give them their money if he thought he could trust them with it. But he said he just knew that they would use it to go and leave him in the lurch and he would have to wait and see that they did n't play him dirty So what could they do about it? There was nowheres to go and get a job in their line.

The Professor was one of them kind that if he owed you money he could talk to you so that you would feel in debt to him. One time when we had done pretty well the curiosities went and asked if they could n't have their money. He started right in and give them a lecture about ingratitude and all the things they had to be thankful for.

"Why," he says, "when I was a boy—and learning the business—with a WAGON show—there was times when I would have to walk all night in hilly country behind the bear cage with a CHUNK in my arms. ALL NIGHT, mind you—dragging my feet in the mud and the elephant chugging along behind me. And when the horses stopped to breathe on a muddy hill I would have to shove the chunk under that hind wheel just as the bear cage settled back. And when they started up I would have to grab up that chunk and follow along again. And me half asleep. And the chunk getting heavier all the time. I have done it when it was so muddy you could hear the elephant chugging half a mile away. You folks don't REALIZE how easy you 've got it. Why, I have seen the day when if I seen a chance to climb up on the bear cage—which had a brass railing around it to HANG ONTO when

you 're sleeping—I would think I was in LUCK. But I COULD N'T. I would have to grab up the big pitch-pine chunk, all muddy and heavy, and keep dragging along after the wagon with it in my arms. You folks don't KNOW the show business; you come here and talk and whine to me like a lot of amateurs—just a lot of AMATEURS. Why, sometimes I wished I was A BEAR. I wished I was A BEAR that could ride and be inside out of the rain and be took care of. This here bein' a freak ain't no harder than bein' a bear—not a BIT

"'With a chunk in my arms'"

harder. Just the same thing. All you have to do is just be. And you get transportation and all traveling expenses. And just FLOATING—livin' right at home every inch of the way. Why, I 've seen the day that if I could 'a' been a Fat Lady on a scow you could n't 'a' dragged me out of the job."

He would go on like that and show them they was just amateurs. And when he got through they would be glad they was on top of earth and breathing. He said that one of them convict niggers that can put their ball and chain in the wheel-barrow while they 're working has got it EASY beside a real show man. He left it to Stubbs, who had done it, too, and he said it was so. And that settled it.

A couple of days after that the medicine show, which was going on wheels, struck into the river again and we did n't do very well. So then the Professor pointed out that it was a case of making money one place and losing another and that he was starting to go behind. And he said they would all have to help him get up again; if they did n't he would bust and lose all that was coming to them and he would n't like to see them do that. You see when a show gets into your debt and is doing bad you 've got to help it along to save yourself and get your money. Because, you see, it 's you that 's the show; and when you quit there ain't any. So you can't get nothing. So the more it owes you the more you 've got to stick right to it. And the more the manager owes you the more independent he can be and boss you around because then it is your show, too. If you make a lot he wins, and if you

don't make anything you lose; that 's the way it is with a show that ain't got nothing but you. So what could them freaks do? He had them sure because he kept them busted. If he paid them they could 'a' quit. He knew his business, Stubbs said so.

But Stubbs did n't bother none. He got his money right from the start because he would 'a' quit the minute he did n't. And the Professor knew it. The others would sympathize with each other and tell their troubles behind the Professor's back, but Stubbs just tended to business. He said floating on a scow was just a vacation for him till he was in shape for the big show again; and as long as he was paid fair for an honest job of tumbling it suited him all right. Stubbs told me that the reason the Professor would n't give them a cent now was because we was coming near to Vicksburg, which was a big town, and if they had money they could take the railroad and go somewhere else. And the Professor could n't afford to lose the money he could make out of them.

One Saturday afternoon when me and Rags was laying down and feeling dozy from the night before, Stubbs give me a poke and says, "Get up, Sammy; here 's the city of the hundred hills." I sat up and rubbed my eyes and there we was at a big town where the bank was all heaved up into round hills crowded together. That woke me right up and done me good; there ain't anything you get more homesick for than hills. By the time we had made fast, and the Professor had gone up-town and arranged

to pitch the tent and give a show there, it was pretty late in the evening; and when he come back he told us the next day was going to be Sunday and we would have to lay over. So we just put up the tent to let it stand over Sunday and advertise itself; the Professor said he did n't mind Sunday coming, considering the way it happened, because it would more than pay to use a day that way, anyhow.

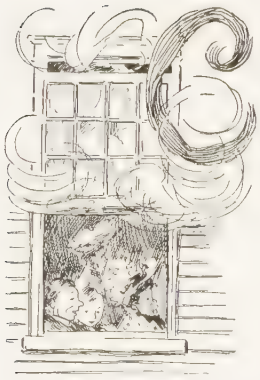
On Sunday morning we got up late and found that the Giant and the Tattooed Man had skipped; them and their things was gone. The Professor started right in and give us fits about them, saying how surprised he was to be taken unawares like that and it was just what he expected they would do when they got here. He went on and said what an embarrassing predicament it was for a man to lose his main attractions like that and he was glad they went because they was n't no good, anyhow. He knew very well they would skip out if he paid them their wages and so he was glad he did n't; he said they did n't deserve it and he was glad he held back till he found out like this. It was n't the first time he had guessed right. He said they was just a pair of them kind nowadays that just look out for their own interests all the time and have n't got no loyalty or appreciation of business responsibilities. And he never did pay anybody that went and quit him that way; it was one rule and principle he always made. Them kind don't deserve no wages and he 'd be blamed if they ever come it over him; he had a pretty good knowledge of that unprincipled class of people.

Well, when he got started on that principle business he opened up and preached a regular Sunday sermon on Ingratitude; I guess it lasted most an hour. After he had shown what a serious position such people put a man in he said it did n't make no difference, anyhow, because it would only be necessary for him to get out his Magic outfit and for Stubbs to stretch the Minstrels a little and the show would be as good as ever; maybe better. I guess Stubbs got tired of his talking; anyways I did.

"The Giant and the Tattooed Man had skipped"

CHAPTER XXIV

STUBBS GETS SOME "BUSINESS"



COME on, Sammy," Stubbs says. "Let 's go and take a walk for a change."

So we went up-town. I guess maybe there was a hundred hills, anyways, a dozen or so all run together. Anyways, there was plenty of them for the people to bore into them and live when the soldiers was shooting bomb-shells over into them every day; but now they are living on top again. Every place was locked up and quiet where the stores was. After a while we passed a church where they was singing "Hark from the tombs a doleful sound"; it was pretty solemn and I was glad when we got out of range. It was pretty hilly. We went up and down the principal street, which I mean that we went straight ahead, and after a while we was clean out of the city into the country where it was quiet—but a different kind of quiet. It was a fine warm Sunday morning with everything all green and beauti-

ful and the birds a-singing; we rambled right along and enjoyed ourselves.

After a while it sounded like we was coming to another church; I heard something like organ music in the distance. It was a little nigger church. It was all open on accounts of the warm weather and there was smoke and music coming out of the doors and windows.

"It looks like they had a smudge. Let 's go inside and sit down," says Stubbs. "Maybe I could pick up some business." You see that was what he called a new idea for a step in dancing or a joke; it is show talk. Stubbs was always intending to quit clowning and get into minstrels, where he could travel round in style, so he was always looking for minstrel business. So we took off our hats and went in and sat down respectable.

The preacher had just got through giving out announcements and now he sat down and looked respectable and solemn, and then the congregation made it seem quieter by coughing and getting settled. The coughing come from the smudge fire in the stove; the door of it was open and the long pipe was disjointed so that there would n't be any draft to make a real fire. That way it would just smoke a little out of the stove door and the end of the pipe and keep out mosquitoes and gnats and such things; and I whispered to Stubbs that there was a good deal of sense in that way of getting rid of them. But Stubbs said there was a good deal more incense—he could think a joke right up that way. Just when the preacher sat down, a girl in

her Sunday clothes got up in the back and came forward up the middle aisle carrying a big frosted cake before her with nuts on it. She set it right up on the pulpit and then sat down on one of the front pews. She took out her fan and fanned a little and nodded how-do sociable to the black mammy next to her like she thought what she had done was n't nothing. The preacher looked polite and nodded his head a quarter of an inch and then looked solemn again. Stubbs he said that the reason she sat down in the back at first was because she wanted to promenade the whole length with the cake—he could see into every little thing like that. And mostly he was right. One of the deacons got up quiet and went to look at the smudge fire and when he was through rattling the poker the preacher gave out the hymn and they sang again; the tune it was "Rise and Shine." Then they sung "Hard Trials," and ended up with one that I don't know the name of, but it is easy to remember. And it was mighty good singing—just like an organ.

"Carrying a big frosted cake"

"My Lord deliberated Daniel;
My Lord deliberated Daniel;
My Lord deliberated Daniel—
Why can't he deliberate me?
I met a pilgrim on the way,
An' I ask him whar 's he gwine:
I 'm bound for Canaan's happy land,
An' dis is de shoutin' band—
Go on!"

This is all I got of that one; Stubbs he remembered and wrote it down that way because he said it was good business. After the singing the preacher stood up before the pulpit and prayed some about all these here material blessings which had been showered down and then looked solemn and said what he was going to preach about. What he preached about was Pride. He opened the Bible right near the front cover and started to tell about rivers; and right there I got interested and paid attention. Anything about rivers always suits me. He said that in the Garden of Eden there was four rivers. And he opened to the second chapter of the Genesis and read about it: "The name of the first is Pison; that it is which encompasseth the whole land of Havilah where there is gold." That got me more interested and I paid close attention. The reason it is called Pison is because it is in a land of gold; and he said that was the point. Gold, he says, can pison the mind and pison the soul and where there is a lot it can pison the whole country. That is the reason, he says, that this river is put down the first. "Kase why?" he says. "Kase

gold is de worst kin' ob pison.'' But he did n't get around to the other three rivers or where they emptied into; he just mentioned it because gold makes people proud.

Well, that sounded like pretty good sense and I did n't know it before. I did n't know a nigger could get up anything so sensible. He kept on and just throwed it into Pride. And he said that Pride goeth before a fall. Well, that 's so, too. And he said that Pride goeth around like a raging lion. I don't know how that is, but I 've seen people myself that went around with their nose so high in the air that they can't see nothing till some time they run into a clothes-line or maybe step into a post-hole that somebody has just finished; and then you bet they get it. He kept me listening for a little while and then he got clean out of the channel and did n't seem to know where he was steering. He thumped the pulpit and talked Bible words that I could n't make head nor tail of. It was just religion.

I just sat and looked out of the open window. It was all sunny outside with green trees and fields and the river flowing away off. Pretty soon there come a boat—she was a side-wheeler—with the white steam shoving up out of her pipes and her so far away you could n't hear her; she was like a steamboat framed in a picture, only more natural. I sat and watched how long it would take her to go clean across the window. She kept crawling along and crawling along so slow you 'd think she could n't make St. Louis in two years; but before

long she had went past and out of sight, and then I heard her three-toned whistle like niggers singing together for the landing. I sat and watched if another boat would come past the window. But none come. Only a big yellow bee flew across. My eyes was kind of watery from the smoke and I wiped them with my sleeve so I could see. And then I seen Stubbs wiping his eyes.

They was all getting warmed up and shouting "Hallelujah!" and "Amen!" every little while, first one and then another, and I guess they thought me and Stubbs was feeling bad about religion; anyways, the preacher looked at us and said he was glad to see the white folks coming to hear the Word.

Stubbs he looked awful long-faced and solemn like he always did when he was thinking of jokes. The "Amens" kept coming thicker, and all of a sudden they began to sing:

"Oh, walk togedder, children, don't get weary;
Walk togedder, children, don't get weary;
Walk togedder, children, don't get weary,—
Dere 's a great camp-meetin' in de Promised Lan'.
Gwine to mourn an' nebber tire,
Mourn an' nebber tire,
Mourn an' nebber tire,—
Dere 's a great camp-meetin' in de Promised Lan'.

"Oh, slap your hands, children, don't you get weary;
Slap your hands, children, don't get weary;
Slap your hands, children, don't get weary,—
Dere 's a great camp-meetin' in de Promised Lan'.

They got to all slapping their hands and keeping

time and things was warming up. A big nigger mammy was singing high and slapping; there was all hands that went slappety-slap and some went cloppety-clop. It made me think of loading the old Speed when they was all stepping together. A nigger sings when he works and just the same way he works when he sings: he is tunes all over. And that way they kept on ever so long.

"Oh, pat your foot, children, don't you get weary;
Pat your foot, children, don't get weary;
Pat your foot, children, don't get weary,—
Dere 's a great camp-meetin' in de Promised Lan'.
Gwine to shout an' nebber tire,
Shout an' nebber tire,
Shout an' nebber tire,—
Dere 's a great camp-meetin' in de Promised Lan'.

"Oh, feel de spirit movin', don't you get weary;
Feel de spirit movin', don't get weary;
Feel de spirit movin', don't get weary,—
Dere 's a great camp-meetin' in de Promised Lan'.

"Oh, now I 'm gettin' happy, don't get weary;
Now I 'm gettin' happy, don't get weary;
Now I 'm gettin' happy, don't get weary,—
Dere 's a great camp-meetin' in de Promised Lan'.

"I feel so happy, don't you get weary;
Feel so happy, don't you get weary;
Feel so happy, don't you get weary,—
Dere 's a great camp-meetin' in de Promised Lan'.
Oh, fly and nebber tire,
Fly and nebber tire,
Fly and nebber tire,—
Dere 's a great camp-meetin' in de Promised Lan'.

By that time you could see the spirit moving them all over and swaying them from side to side; and the girl that brung the cake was standing up and almost flying. The preacher had gone and took a seat in the back and he just sat comfortable and contented and clapped his hands like he was willing to let them do the rest: he was big and fat. He just clapped his hands soft and easy and kept saying, "Keep it up, chillen, keep it up!" One of the deacons passed around the collection, which I guess he had forgot, and I was getting so hungry I 'most wished they would pass around the cake. Stubbs put in five cents and told me to wait a while longer; it looked as if he could get some new steps. While the deacon was getting the hat to pass, he started up a solemner one:

"Time is coming daf sinner must die;
I heard a lumbering in de sky;
Time is coming dat sinner must die,—
Dat make me t'ink my time was nigh."

But after the collection was took up they went back to the cheerful kind, which somebody started up; that one was "Inching Along."

"Keep a-inching along; keep a-inching along;
Jesus will come by and by.
Keep a-inching along like a poor inch-worm;
Jesus will come by and by.
'T was a inch by inch I sought the Lord;
Jesus will come by and by.
And a inch by inch he blessed my soul;
Jesus will come by and by."

The girl which brung the cake stood up and started to sway and she tossed off her hat and she dropped the ribbon from around her neck like she was getting ready to sail in and have it out. When she was all ready she started to whirl around and holler "Glory!" and while she was going it I seen her gloves go two different directions like they just whirled off of her. Somebody else hollered "Hallelujah!" and right then the old fat mammy got up and wobbled in her place awhile and then she come into the aisle and started to inch. She inched up and down the aisle, shaking all over, and every step she inched you could feel the floor a-giving. I was awful glad it was n't our Fat Lady that was doing the inching. Whenever she got clean to the end of the aisle she would turn and inch back again and that way she kept a-going it, holding up her hands and singing. And the "Amens" and "Hallelujahs" was coming up here and there like they was just sprout-up out of the music. She would sing one line of the chorus and the rest would all come in on the by-and-by part; it was fine singing. There could n't be nothing better than the way they would sing in tune and all come in together on the chorus, answering each other back and forth. And you could feel the floor keeping time.

"We 'll inch and inch and inch along;
Jesus will come by and by.
And inch and inch till we get home;
Jesus will come by and by."

I happened to look up and seen that the long stovepipe was sinking at a joint; it seemed to be settling inch by inch. I leaned and told Stubbs

"He dropped it mighty quick"

about it, but he just looked solemn and did n't let on. Stubbs could look awful sad when he tried. The whole length of it was only swung on one wire and while I was looking again it come in two—I

mean it come in five or six—and when it struck the floor every joint of it done its own clattering. It brought them all to a stop where they was; I guess they thought the lumbering in the skies had come true. Well, it would 'a' surprised me if I had n't seen it first; it was like sheet-iron thunder. The deacon that was boss of the stove come right over to do something about it; he just stood looking at it but did n't know what to do. Then the preacher, which had stopped marking time with his hands, stood up and raised his hand and said in a loud voice: "Pick it up, Brudder Jackson; pick it up! De La-a-awd woan' let it burn you!"

Brudder Jackson let them all see that he believed it; he picked it up. But he dropped it mighty quick; it burned him the same as an ordinary stovepipe, and made another clatter and took an extra roll or two. Brudder Jackson put his fingers in his mouth and then wiped them on his pants; he did n't say nothing. He just went and sat down. I guess the preacher did n't know the smudge had got to be real fire when he said that.

The girl which brung the cake was picking up her things quiet and fixing them straight, so I thought it was all over, but it was n't. She was only done with her part; the others was just getting started in. Somebody said "Hallelujah!" and then it started up again.

> "Oh, look up yonder, what I see;
> Den a' Hallelujah to de Lamb.
> Dere 's a long tall angel comin' a'ter me;
> Den a' Hallelujah to de Lamb."

They did n't have no organ at all but they did n't need none, the sound of it was right in their voices. The smoke was getting pretty smarty on my eyes so I wiped them again on my coat sleeve. And Stubbs he wiped off a tear that had got started down his face. Stubbs looked so sad that if you did n't know he was a clown you would 'a' thought maybe he was crying. I wanted to go but he said to wait a while longer, he was getting some good ideas for business. Some had their hands up making motions and some was swaying and moving all over and some was marking time and shouting. I bet if Stubbs had got up with the tears in his eyes and done a couple of flip-flaps and a back-summerset they would 'a' thought he had got religion better than all of them.

The old mammy got to rambling around again and shaking hands with everybody and shouting "Glory!" and when she come to me and seen me wiping my eye she grabbed me and hugged me to her and said, "Bress de lamb!" I was most smothered. I can hold my breath and stay under pretty long but when she let go it was about time for me to come up and get air. Well, that was enough for me. When she let loose I got out of there. Then Stubbs come out, too, and we went down the road. We kept straight on to the scow except we stopped awhile where there was some bushes so that Stubbs could practise up his act a little and fix all the things he had learned in his memory. He used me for the audience and he told me to watch close and not think it was foolishness, because it was n't.

Well, I thought all the time that he had been sitting in that church holding his laugh in, but now I seen he had n't. He had been sitting there as long-faced as a deacon and taking them in as serious as could be; that was how he built an act up. You have got to watch close and do thinking when you want to be a minstrels.

He said I must watch close and let him know which of his ways seemed the most natural. He would keep doing a thing over until he could do it just so. Sometimes he did n't suit himself at all; then he would stop and think a little and do it better. You would n't believe how he improved; he just took in everything. When I seen him sing "Doo-dah" up in Memphis I thought it was as good as could be; but he was getting better. You would n't know just how he changed it but it was more natural; it was niggery every way. Well, I never knew before that you had to study to be funny. I thought you just come out and cut up and acted the fool.

When he had got some business so that it suited him we kept on down the road. And while we was going back to the boat he told me something; it was a secret. Stubbs was n't a first-class acrobatic clown no more. Nobody would 'a' noticed it yet except himself; he could do about as good as ever but it was coming harder on him. He said a man can't be first-class except for a few years when he has got the bounce in him. And a couple of seasons ago he began to notice that his first days was over; he was beginning to go back. When he come into

the business fresh he bloomed out of a sudden into a principal leaper; he used to go over the horses and elephants as easy as flying and he enjoyed the hard, quick turns. He could do it yet, too, but he noticed a difference in himself, 'specially in the spring-board work. It did n't come so natural to him; sometimes he felt there was n't even so much style in his back-summersets no more. He did n't like to think of being second-class; he was used to being good. After a while he would be a busted-down clown; and what good is that? It was all getting to be just hard work; 'specially the leaps. So then I seen why he took them things so serious.

That was why he was studying up niggers. He said if he could get up some kind of a darkey act that people would take a notion to, it would settle things for him. It would be something that he could always do even when he was old; because niggers take things easy. Stubbs said that a man like him can be a nigger when he is sixty years old; but he can't be no acrobatic clown when he is sixty. Well, I did n't see how he was going to do dancing and such things when he was that old; and I told him so. He thought it over awhile and then he says:

"Did you ever see a nigger that was a great acrobat or a leaper?"

"No," I says, "I never would 'a' thought to think of it. That 's white men's kind of work."

"That 's the idea exactly," he says.

But Stubbs did n't have the ginger in him like he used to, he said he was n't an acrobatic artist no

more. So I was glad he was getting his other business so good; he was as good as a real nigger as far as I could see. "But that 's one thing," I says, "that they could do themselves."

"No, it ain't," he says. "They 've got to be acted."

He said an actor must know what to pick out, and so he was studying them up all over; and I says to Stubbs that I was real glad that he was getting something that maybe folks would take a notion to and he could make his living at all the time. He said he thought he could. But he said it was all a gamble and you can't tell; you 've got to take your chances. People is hard to find out.

CHAPTER XXV

SAM TAKES HIMSELF ASIDE

AFTER we had dinner there was n't nothing to do around the scow, but the Professor would n't let things rest; he stewed around as if he thought things ought to go on. He was preaching about hustling again. And seeing there was n't no hustling to do and we was n't to blame for it he went away back and dug up a lot of old troubles and used them over again; he was like Rags and a bone. All a bone is good for to Rags is just exercise so that he can chaw meat when he gets it.

He was n't jawing us but he might as well 'a' been; he was using us for it. You 'd 'a' thought that if it was n't for him keeping a show going nobody could make a living. Well, I got sick of it. I decided I would go walking again. But Stubbs could n't go this time; he was busy mending his clown clothes. So I took Rags and we went ourselves.

When I went a piece I asked a fellow about the sights and he said I was on the road to a graveyard. I says to myself, "He thinks he is awful smart." Well, it did seem like I was always getting headed for a church or a graveyard or some of them serious places, and I turned to go back. But the fellow said he was n't making fun; lots of people went there just to see it. Well, that did n't make no difference to me; some folks is that way. I pretty near done the same thing in Memphis where the fourteen thousand was, only I found out in time. But the fellow said pshaw, that graveyard was n't nothing beside theirs; they had pretty near seventeen thousand in theirs. Memphis did n't come up to them by more than two thousand. Why, he said there was more in this place than there was live people in the whole city of Vicksburg. I guessed he was bragging his town up considerable, so I decided I would go and look.

What he said was so; I did n't count them but I could see it. Why, there was over twelve thousand that did n't have no tombstones of their own; they was unknown. They did n't belong to nobody in particular but just belonged to everybody; they was soldiers. If I had known that I would 'a' come in the first place. There was other folks walking around and spending Sunday afternoon. After a while I come to an old lady in black with a young lady holding her arm; and she was saying it seemed to her like her boy was in every one of them graves. Sometimes there ain't anything to tell whether it is a man or a woman or old or

young. But everybody knows anyway what they are because they are soldiers. There is so many you never could count them; and all buried in rank and file like they was soldiers yet; there was just companies and regiments of graves and it was a regular dead army. When I found out how it was I got to thinking and standing there where it was quiet and still and it made me feel awful bad.

I added up all the ones here to the ones in Memphis and they come to more than thirty thousand —just in them two places. And after a while from counting that up I got to figuring up how much my wages was that the Professor owed me. I got so far I did n't count any more; it was too much. Then I sat down on a grave and I says to myself that I had better make up my mind about myself. And I did. I says to myself, "Look a' here, Sam Daly, this ain't no way for you to do. The show is a fraud; it ain't a respectable business that you would want to let anybody know about, and you know it. You just drift along and let him bully-rag and borrow as if you did n't have no sense or independence; it is about time for you to say you are going to do something and then do it. You get good wages and Rags gets more than most dogs do, but the Professor borrows them all back again. And you have to lend them back to hold your job. It will always be that way till you quit, and then you won't get them because he don't pay anybody that quits; you see that for yourself. If you had Clancy to help, he would make him pay or fight; he would take it out of his hide. But he ain't here

and this ain't no way to find him. By rights you ought to do it yourself but you ain't big enough. Anyways, it is a disrespectable fraud and no good; so you better quit this business that has money in it but don't pay."

And I quit right there. I had a notion to go back and tell him to pay up the money; it was mine by rights. But I guessed I better not because I had two dollars and he might take them back. The best thing for me was to lay low where he would n't find me. This was the best place to stay awhile; he would n't waste his time in such a place.

Well, I did n't belong to the scow no more and so I did n't have no home; I felt the difference right away. The difference was only in my mind but you can't help it; I was away off down South where I did n't know nobody or have any place to go into. I kept walking around among them soldiers that did n't belong to nobody, and felt kind of lonesome. But after a while I come across some that was from my own State and I felt more at home; so I guessed that was where I would stop awhile. While I was sitting on one of them an old man come along walking with a cane and when he seen me and Rags he stopped and asked me questions. I told him I come off a boat; and that was n't no lie even if I did n't let on I was from a show. When he found I was from up North he patted Rags on the head and talked a little and told me some things about the place and went away. I done different things to pass the time. It was a good place to play mumblety-peg, so I done that;

but it dulled my knife all up. So then I found a good stone and spit on it and sharpened it till it would cut like a razor; and that passed considerable time. Between times I would go and take a walk among the others and keep wondering how they was killed. Some was killed making charges and some was killed in forts and some died in trenches and I wished I knew which was cavalry. But you could n't tell which; they was all in trenches now. Trenches is just like digging a grave and getting down into it and shooting till they hit you; and sometimes there ain't anything left for the rest to do but shovel the dirt in on top of you. Lots of them was buried that way for a while and all mixed up; but these here was all got together and buried in lines like they was always going to be. When I had looked around some more I would get back to my place again; and Rags got so that he took right up with that place. When I would turn back he would run ahead and sit right down on that grave; he is smart about noticing things that way.

Along in the afternoon when I had took a long walk and got back again I was pretty tired, so I sat down and staid right there. And I got to thinking about all kinds of bad luck, 'specially Valdes and his wife. I wondered where he had been going around to find her and if he had had any luck, but I guessed he had n't. Most likely not. Most likely he had been looking for me and wondering where I went, too. But that did n't make any difference; I had n't found out anything to tell him, anyhow.

I wished I had, though, because I liked her, leastways I felt that way from what I heard of her. And it was a shame for her to be poor when she was so rich. Well, I got to thinking into it. And I says to myself, "Look a' here, Sam Daly, you better think things out right now; you 've decided to quit, but what 's the use of deciding what you ain't going to do. There he is looking for her and maybe looking for you. And here you are looking for Clancy. And if you found Clancy and Clancy he found her, then neither of us would know where *he* is. The way things are now we are *all* unknowns. The only person you have kept track of is yourself and Rags and here you are hiding away. What you want to do is to go back on the Speed where you will be somewheres. The way to do that is to go right straight to New Orleans where the Woodland comes, and the captain will take you back to St. Louis where the Speed comes. You want to stay where you belong and then him and Clancy will both know where you are. Maybe Clancy will come some day to see Rags. Then you can tell him and maybe he will find her and tell you. Then Valdes will come to see you some day and you can tell him; that way you will bring them all together. It all depends on you staying where you belong; anyways, you won't ever find anything by hunting for it. On the Speed you will be taking more chances. And you have got to always take your chances."

Well, that looked like pretty good sense to me; so I took that advice. The only thing now was to

'' The sun was going down over the edge''

keep out of sight of the Professor awhile. So I sat there remembering all about Valdes and his wife and thinking how things goes.

First thing I knew the sun was going down over the edge and it was getting dusk. I bet if it had been a regular graveyard I would 'a' cleared out of there long before; I am afraid of them after the

sun goes down. But I sat in this one and never thought of it; and when I got up and left I did n't hurry. I just walked down between the rows and did n't feel scary at all. Mostly I don't trust dead people much; it ain't natural. But soldiers is different. I guess it is because they did n't die and have no funeral at all but was just killed fighting. Anyways, you know they ain't that kind.

When I got back to town it was good and dark, so now there was n't any risk of the Professor seeing me and I could go right down to the river. There was a New Orleans packet right at the levee, and most ready to go. I thought awhile what to tell the captain and the only good thing I could make up was the truth. I made it up that I would tell him first about me being a steamboater; and when he got that in his head right, I would explain how I come to be a Human Dictionary with a show. I would n't 'a' let out about the show at all but I seen I had to so things would hang together. He listened and let me tell it all through, then he looked us over and laughed.

"Well," he says, "it 's usually the other way. This is the first time I ever saw a boy running away from a show. If that 's what you are doing I 'll put you pretty far away from it by morning."

I did n't figure on him looking at it that way at all; I was afraid it would work different. But I 've found, anyway, that as long as you ain't gone and done nothing you don't need to lie—not if you give the truth the right kind of a show. And, besides, when you get a lie on your hands

you 've got to take care of it, and it gets to be more trouble than you thought it was going to be when it was little. I could n't 'a' fixed the truth up better if I 'd 'a' known beforehand how it was going to work.

CHAPTER XXVI

NOTHING TO DO BUT THINK

IT seemed mighty good to be on a steamboat again after drifting so long. And when the engines started to breathe and she struck right out for wherever she wanted to go it felt almost like something new to be on a live boat. She did n't churn up behind like the big tow-boat; she was a swift side-wheeler with nothing but herself and she could make time; she seemed to be right on the surface of the water, running on her two big wheels. I sat and listened to her pipes till I would 'a' knowed them if I heard them coming, and then I rolled in and the engines put me to sleep.

Sometime in the dark there was a noise that gradually woke me up. When I got on my things and went out we was just pulling away from Natchez. It is on a hill, too, and that is all I knew about it. That was over a hundred miles we had gone; it made me think of the show-towns between,

and all we had skipped. Then I got into my bunk again and the pipes snored me to sleep.

Next morning when I was acquainted with everybody I sat up in the pilot-house and watched the channel and learned a lot. The old flat was in my head yet and the slow way of going. When I first learned about old times and keel-boat men I wished I had lived then; but now I had had enough of scows But some ways I had learned a lot on the scow, if it had only been any good. I got to thinking about the keel-boat men and how Mary McKay said they run their boats, and it did n't look reasonable to me; and after a while I seen it was n't true at all. I had seen too much of the river for that. First place, if fourteen or twenty men was pushing a boat up-stream with their poles and they all went to the bows and turned their backs and set their poles on bottom and walked her up-stream till they was at the stern, they would put her ahead all right; anybody can see that. But when they got to the stern and lifted their poles and marched forward to do it again, what would happen? Why, a river like the Mississippi would stop her on the spot; and by the time they got to the bows again she would be drifted back as far as they had shoved her ahead—maybe farther. Them men could n't give a big boat enough headway to buck the Mississippi between times; they would n't ever get nowhere; I don't care who says so. I told the pilot all about it to see what he would have to say.

"It 's true as far as it goes," he says. "But you see the men on each side of the boat worked in

turn. One side was setting their poles and starting back just as the others had got to the stern and was coming forward dragging their poles behind them on the water."

Well, that was more sensible; I seen right off they knew their trade and they figured it out all right. The pilot said I was right to not believe it.

"That 's right; keep your doubts about you," he said. And he said that this thing of taking half a thing on trust and swallowing it for the whole was n't no better than believing a lie; it was n't learning at all. Mary McKay had n't gone to the bottom, like as if she had learned a trade. But she was mighty smart at what come natural to her. That 's the way with women; they just believe things.

Them days you had to pay seven or eight times as much to ride on a keel-boat as you would now on a fine steamboat like the Natchez. Why, the pilot told me you had to pay a hundred and sixty dollars to the keel-boat people to get aboard with the rest of the freight and have them pole you up to Ohio, or some place; and it took five months of your time. But I guess it was worth it with keel-boat men that you could depend on; there was pirates on them islands out in the river and it was all wild with Indians around. Them pirates must 'a' had it easy with thousands of dollars' worth of stuff going up and down; what would anybody want to be an ocean pirate for? Ocean pirates has to be out in storms and go after things, but a river pirate can just sit there and everything has got to come

his way. It would n't 'a' been hard at all if it was n't for them keel-boat men being such hard customers with their rifles. No wonder they kept the English out of New Orleans; it was just like going to work and doing a job at their trade.

You 'd wonder that such rough men would protect everybody and their property and fight for them, besides doing the work; and I asked the pilot if they was all such square fellows. He said "yes," taking them altogether they was; they was a pretty tough lot some ways, but you could trust them. But he said you can't just swallow that whole, either; sometimes it looked as if some of them was in partners with the pirates. Or maybe it was the pirates that sometimes went and got a job; that would be a smart way. Then when you paid your hundred and sixty dollars and went traveling you better watch out. I guess it would 'a' been lots of fun to live back in them times for a while. But taking it for all the time I would rather have steamboats.

While we was talking them things over, the pilot told me to shut up and he put the wheel over a couple of whirls and the whistle blew for Baton Rouge. The first thing I seen was a castle away up high where the green bluffs show off above the river. I found out they used it for the capitol, but I knew it was a castle right away; it had square scollops all along the tops of the walls. I found we was going to lay there a little while and so I could go up and see it; I had n't never seen a real castle before. The capitol at Jefferson City in Mis-

souri is stone, too, and it has a dome, but this had a flat top; that 's the way a castle has got to be, so the men can go up on top and shoot from them battlements. While I was going up a road where the front yards sloped down to it, I come to the Governor's house. It was a little cottage like the rest, with a steep little yard that was just a bank of roses and vines and other flowers, and mighty pretty if you like them. The Governor come out of the house and I seen him go up the street; he was just an ordinary man with a pretty good suit of clothes. But they was n't nothing extra. When I got farther along I stopped where it was open and give the town a look; away off behind it you could see lots of green woods and grass open between. Not far from the castle, where there was plenty of open between the houses for everybody, I seen a big brick baker's oven that was built round like a little hay-stack, and I wondered whether he ever baked real bread in it. I had n't had anything but biscuit for ever so long; they have heard tell of cold bread down there but never tried it. It made me hungry again for a piece of bread and butter, with maybe molasses on it. I guess he done the baking for all of them there where it was out of doors and would n't heat things up; it is all more outdoorsy down South. But I hurried on because I wanted mainly to see a castle.

When I got closer it did n't seem so strong; so I went and rapped on the pillars to find if they was hollow. And then I thumped it all over like a watermelon to see if it was a real castle. It was

pretty good, but I guess you could 'a' got the best of it with a set of tools. I have seen castles that you could 'a' put a hull on and used for a steamboat—so you have got to watch out that you ain't fooled. This would do all right—you could imagine it was a castle pretty good. So I took out my jack-knife and whittled a splinter where it was wood and kept it; and while I was doing it the whistle blew and I had to clear out and make tracks to the boat again. And while I was a-going I grabbed one of the Governor's roses that had its head stuck out between the palings and I got back just as the staging was ready to swing up. Then I stood watching it getting smaller and smaller and would 'a' most thought it was n't real again if I was n't picking my teeth with a piece of it. And I give the rose to a lady that thought it was something fine.

Well, the rest of that day we was certainly down South; before it was the cotton and now it was the cane. That country ain't monotonous like they say, at all; it is just easy to enjoy. The scenery don't half try, but you like it anyway, and you feel satisfied and think it is good enough for you. I seen low places with swamps in them, and the careless-looking woods with the gray moss hanging on them all tattered and torn, and the sugar plantations getting so big and prosperous that you 'd know New Orleans was somewheres around, and every once in a while something pretty would come between, 'specially a white house that looked like home—with the green bushes in front with oranges

like gold balls stuck all over. Then there would be a big brick factory chimney right in the fields where they burned cane when they had squeezed the sugar juice out of it, and sometimes there

"One of the Governor's roses"

would be the big live-oaks planted all along the banks and far enough apart for such big things to have room and be regular. I guess the prettiest thing of all was the big, dark, live-oak trees; some of them plantations had them planted for miles

along the bank like shade trees, till you 'd think the Mississippi was just a steamboat street. And it must 'a' took years and years for them to grow so big. And they are stationed along like big giants standing guard over that river that needs so much watching. I just sat on the hurricane-deck with my back against the texas and let it pass by; and the sun was warming me up just about right, like bed-clothes all over. Well, it *was* like sitting up in bed with nothing to do; you feel just that way. And once I seen them putting the rip-rap along the sloping shore like they was weaving a basket to hold the Mississippi in.

The signs of New Orleans kept getting stronger. After a while the ships started in. When I seen that I stood up and thinks to myself, "Here we are." But when I had stood and watched them so long that I was tired I sat down again. After we had traveled past ships so long that I thought we must be there half a dozen times I begun to open my eyes and wonder if there was n't ever no end to it. It seemed there was miles and miles of them. After a while I did n't bother to notice separate ships at all; they was like cattle. And we was n't near there yet. By the time I got to New Orleans I was pretty near used to living there.

We got to the stopping place that evening at the foot of Canal Street, and then we was only to the middle of the ships that was tied there. And Canal was all lit up. It was a big street of double width with a piece that was n't street at all in the middle. I went just a little piece up it till I come to Henry

Clay standing in the middle of it on his monument and looking down the street and out of the end of it like he was discovering the Mississippi. But he was n't the man that done that; he done something else; he was a Southern general or something, I guess. But I can't tell so much from Vicksburg down; I had been going by steam.

CHAPTER XXVII

SAM HAS AN ATTACK OF EXPLANATION

ELL, I went and made a fool of myself in New Orleans. Afterwards I seen it. First mistake I made was to spend so much money for everything; I ought to 'a' been more careful with that sixty cents and it would 'a' seen me through. But when a fellow has plenty of money he don't think of them things.

You see, after the packet put me off at New Orleans I spent a day walking up and down and learning all about ships; I did n't bother much about the city, it was just houses. There is something about ships; I don't know what it is, but I guess it is the foreign countries; and the more I mixed up with them sailors I seen steamboating was n't nothing. Them sailors call the river boats just mud-turkles. I come across an old fellow with ear-rings in his ears that talked to me like I was a sailor, too, and knew about dozens of countries; he

come from a country that I never heard of, but he could talk English, and he was on the ship with a Norwegian and a Frenchman and a Portuguese and she was an American ship called the Rover that was loading with cotton for Havre. The countries was all mixed up and it did n't make any difference to them. And pretty soon I got to seeing that the United States was just a foreign country, too, and only a stopping place. I found I could get a job on that ship where I was acquainted with the sailors and right away I seen the thing for me to do was to be a sailor and leave this country behind and go to Havre. I took the job and every day I learned things. Pretty soon I found that Havre was in France; but that did n't make no difference —I would just as leave it would be there. But I found that she was n't going to sail for maybe three weeks yet, and that seemed a long time. After I had went on the ship I kind of give up this country for a while, anyways, and I did n't like to be laying alongside of the United States like that. When I found it out I tried to get a job on a ship that was going to England right away but they would n't have me. So I staid on that one. I got along pretty well for most of the three weeks and the time was getting near.

But one evening the steward come into the galley looking pretty mad; I could see him glowering out of his eyes. And just as I was going to say something he grabbed me and backed me out over the high sill of the galley—which I forgot to step over and fell down—and he jerked me up again and

backed me down the waist and drew his foot back and says, "Get off of here, you *river* rat." And the next I knew I sailed down the gangway of the brig Rover and landed in the United States again. When I picked myself up I seen his yellow freckled face a-frowning at me over the side of the ship and then he cussed me and told me what I had done. What I had done, I had stirred the captain's fried potatoes with a fork and mixed them up; and I should 'a' turned them over and not broke up the slices. And the captain he had spoke of it. How did I know that the captain cared; it don't make no difference in the taste. But I did n't say nothing back because the place was hurting where he kicked. I limped away and sat down behind a cotton bale and felt the sore place on my leg. And next, Rags, which had been laying in the forecastle, come sailing after me.

The worst of it was that I lost my job just at the worst time. The best time to lose a job is in the morning; then you can maybe get another in time to have a place to sleep. It was all quiet on the levee. All the hundreds of niggers and bosses had gone away and left the rows of molasses barrels and the bales of cotton, which I guess there was thousands of them.

There was n't nothing but the lights of the ships all along and sometimes the rap of a policeman's club. And the different lots of cotton had the tarpaulins thrown over them like they had all been put to bed for the night. In day they was all white, but now they had the dark covers on them as far

"I seen his yellow freckled face"

as you could see; it don't do to let rain get on the cotton. I guess the canvas in all them tarpaulins would 'a' made dozens of circus tents.

I guessed I would have to do like I seen another fellow do; so I sat there just like I belonged to the ship yet, and after a while I ducked under the tarpaulin and went to bed while a policeman was n't looking. Rags come right along and when I had got fixed with my sore place up he snuggled in close and it was first class, as good as anybody would want. Cotton is good to sleep on and the tarpaulin covers you up.

It is against the law to sleep in under the tarpaulins that way, 'specially if you light a pipe and smoke yourself to sleep. Cotton burns mighty lively and the policeman has got to watch out. I did n't smoke none, but they don't stop to ask whether you do or not; it is against the law anyways. That made it seem better to sleep there after you got in. Outside it was dangerous and inside it was private and safe; so I just settled down and took it comfortable. And, anyways, it seemed mighty homelike to be sleeping under canvas where it was all mine.

I felt like I was in pretty good luck; and now there was n't anything to do but lay in the dark and think. And when I had my mind all made up I would go to sleep.

I thought it over awhile and then I says to myself, "Look a' here, Sam Daly, this is what comes from changing your mind. You did n't stick to what you thought up sensible and said you was

going to, and here you are with a sore leg. This is what you get for disobeying the laws that you made up for yourself. Elkins says that when you make a law for yourself you don't want to repeal it; here you said you was going back to St. Louis and help Valdes and you did n't do it. It is maybe all right to bust laws that other folks make, 'specially if you have to and it don't hurt and you don't get caught; but there ain't no use in you making up sensible laws if you don't live up to them. There ain't no use in you making a rule and only using it part of the time; it ain't no good after it is busted. So now you better start over and go ahead till you get to St. Louis like you said in the first place."

That settled that. Then there was n't anything for me to do but go back in my mind and think up to the place where I was; then I guessed I could go to sleep.

Some ways I wished the mate had got me: him and the cook both claimed me at first, but when they argued about it the cook came out on top. Then I had to haul up water for both of them. The bucket was a canvas bag with tarred rope around the mouth to hold it open; everybody makes things according to their own trade. And, anyway, I guess a wooden bucket would get busted in storms. The rope of it was awful long and heavy because the hull of the boat stood up a couple of stories out of the water. I would have to let it away down into the river like getting water out of a well and it made me tireder than I could stand; sometimes I

wished I was a windlass. But they was jackscrewing the cotton into her hold so tight you 'd think she would bust and that made her go down a little every day and it was n't quite so far. And just as I was getting tougher and was feeling used to it the work was getting easier and was most done. That 's the way things goes.

The first thing when I went on I seen I would have to learn every knife and fork and spoon in each of their leather straps against the bulkhead; so I started right in and studied hard. After a while I got so I could reach out in the dark and find any one of them. I guessed I would be good at my job. Everything was in leather straps that way because you see they can't just drive a nail and hang a thing up anywheres on an ocean boat. A storm would jiggle the whole business off and they would go chasing around under your feet. It looked funny to see the two cables stretched out from the stove and fastened to rings in the floor; it was the first time I ever knew a ship had rigging on the stove. The whole kitchen, which is the galley, was n't no bigger than the Woodland's icebox where they kept the legs of beef and things; everything on a ship has to be snug and tight and fastened in its own place. I guess you could 'a' turned the Rover upside down and there would n't 'a' been a jingle in the galley. I would like to see someone turn a river boat upside down; I bet she would spill all over.

One of the crew told me that last trip one of the sailors was washed clean off the end of the yardarm. I seen for myself that she must jump around

considerable; but when I looked away up and then away down I guessed I would hold off on believing that for a while; it did n't look likely. But after a while I stumbled right into the truth and knew it for myself; and it was like this. It looked to me like it was foolishness to have a high door-sill that you have to think to step over every time you go out of the galley and maybe forget it. I made up my mind that it was a fool notion, so I went and spoke to the ship's carpenter about it. What he told me was that when we was out to sea, and the waves was high, and the ship keeling, she sometimes went over so far that the water was chasing right along the deck. The sill was to keep the ocean from coming into the kitchen and getting our feet wet. After that I looked up again and tried to figure out whether that yard-arm could ever take a dip; I could n't hardly believe it, but it was true according to the sill. I guess nobody would make a sill like that for nothing and so I believed it. The more I looked into things the more I seen they was n't just fashions at all, but everything was for something. It is awful hard to make improvements on a ship; I guess there is ten thousand reasons in one.

I laid under the tarpaulin thinking them things over and every once in a while I would think of what the cook called me and how he said it. He called me "you river rat" as if it was some disgrace, and that is what stuck in my craw. And I had told him good and plain that when I was on a river boat I was going to be a pilot. But he did n't understand, I guess; he called it a wheelsman job and did n't seem to think it was nothing. That 's be-

cause a wheelsman on a ship ain't nothing; and so he did n't understand. A wheelsman on a ship gets about five dollars a week, and on a river boat you get maybe forty; that 's one difference. A pilot on a river boat ain't a wheelsman any more than an ocean pilot is a wheelsman; it don't make any difference if he does hold the wheel. You see a wheelsman on a ship just minds the compass till they get near to land; but they don't dast to run in till an ocean pilot comes out in his private boat to meet them. The ocean pilot climbs up over the side and tells the captain to take a back seat and puts the wheelsman to one side and takes hold himself. That 's what an ocean pilot is. They have got to have somebody that knows when they are fooling around where it is shallow. Well, on a river boat the wheelsman is a pilot ALL the time. That is what a river pilot is. And the captain don't ever say nothing.

On a river boat the wheel is so big that the hub is most on the floor, and there is a slit in the floor for the wheel to go down through. The pilot knows it all for maybe twelve hundred miles and does his thinking right out of his own head. But on a ship the wheel is a little thing up at your chest and all you have to do is to watch the hand of a compass and keep it pointing where the captain told you beforehand. It is as easy as going by a clock and one of them would n't work on the Mississippi. The captain says to keep her on half past twelve and you just stand there and do it. Beside that there ain't a sand bar within a mile of the surface. What is there hard about that? At

first I thought I would be a wheelsman that guides ships across the ocean; but when I found out about it I changed my mind. But that cook had wheelsmen and river pilots all mixed up. I wished I had 'a' told him that a river wheelsman gets more than his old captain; I guess that would 'a' rubbed it into him. But I did n't think of it.

Ocean captains is different, too. A steamboat captain is used to going up and down between the scenery, and meeting lots of travelers when they are all cheerful about going to see their folks. And they act sociable with him till he feels like the chief traveler himself; everything is his friends. But look at a sail-boat captain and how he gets. He is being knocked around out on the lonesome ocean where all the weather is; and it is always laying for him and watching for another chance to do him up; everything is his enemies. And when there ain't trouble between times he is ready for it anyway. He don't mix up common with the crew but figures his arithmetic down in the cabin, and only has doings with the sun and stars; and when he is up on deck he is just boss. Some ways he is more alone than if there was n't anybody else on the ship but him; I could see that plain right there in port. When a storm is getting itself ready he has got to see it first, and then he has got to sail in and get the best of the ocean and get the best of his men—which is all there is to get the best of; and that way he gets to be on the other side of everything.

Look at that captain and how he was. He lived under deck towards the stern and down some stairs

"You'd think we was feeding wild animals"

that is called the companionway. That is the little cabin down in the hull of the brig; and in a storm it is safest down there with the lid on. But the galley where we done the cooking was a little house built on deck near the middle; the waves could 'a' washed it off and not sunk the boat at all. Well, when the cook was getting dinner he would be whistling a sea-tune to himself; but when it was ready and he got the dishes all loaded on his long arm he would get stern and solemn and march down the deck and down into the cabin to feed the captain. He would stay down there and wait on him and I would have to bring the next thing to the head of the stairs just at the right time. The cook would come up and stick his head out and whisper to me what to bring next and I would whisper back. You 'd think we was feeding wild animals down in their den.

Well, after I found that on a ship the captain is more important than a wheelsman and it is just the other way from a steamboat, I seen the thing to learn to be was a captain. And when I found what captains was like I changed my mind about that, too. I would rather sit in the rigging or mix up in the forecastle and spin yarns. The only good thing to be is a sailor. Some ways I was sorry them fried potatoes did n't hold off till we was out at sea; then they could n't 'a' put me off. But here I was and there could n't be nothing done about it. So I fixed myself an easy way to sleep and put my hand on Rags in the dark; and I felt him wagging his tail against me and I went to sleep.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SAM GETS ON THE INSIDE OF THINGS

I HAD made up my mind to wake up early before anybody came, and so in the morning I come to as if I had an alarm clock inside of me; it is that way if you know how to make up your mind. I got out pretty careful and nobody seen me, and then I went between some rows of cotton bales and looked at my sore place. I expected it would be black and blue, but it was n't; it was a greeny yellow and did n't look as bad as it ought to. But it did n't hurt none unless I poked it and so it did n't make no difference; I did n't need to poke it except once in a while.

I was pretty hungry that morning; Rags was hungry, too, but he found a bone and brought it along till I would stop and give him a chance at it. I went across the levee and walked around different directions, not knowing the best place to go. Whenever I would stop to think, Rags would

lay the bone down; and whenever a man come along he would grab it up again; he was afraid everybody would want it. Rags thought people was like dogs; he did n't stop to think.

After a while I come across a big market. It was just a big roof all open at the sides and full of stuff; it was like groceries and butcher shops all run together, with stands of flowers and herbs and everything between. I went and looked at the fish and oysters and meat and vegetables and all kinds of victuals that was n't cooked yet. At one end of it I come to the smell of coffee. Under that part of the roof was an outdoors restaurant which was just two rows of marble stalls that you walked down between; it was the funniest and best place to eat I ever seen. I bet them marble stalls would 'a' made a livery stable for a whole circus of Shetland ponies; but instead of a manger there was a marble slab for you to eat on. You went in like a horse and sat down on your stool and then you had your three marble walls around you and your back was the other wall. You just sat there with your back turned to everybody that was going through to the market and minded your own business and they could n't see nothing and you could n't see them; it was the privatest out-of-doors place I ever seen. It made me think of the bake oven at Baton Rouge; things is more outdoorsy down South and I wondered how it would work next. I walked up and down and looked at the rows of backs and got hungrier and hungrier. Some was sitting up straight, and some was leaning over, and some was

bobbing up and down and meeting every mouthful half-way. After a while when a man was through being fed me and Rags went and took a stall. We ate up all of twenty cents' worth. I hated to spend money that way just for eating; I always got it for nothing when I was working. But you have got to do it.

Then I went up Canal Street and I come across a railroad that I would 'a' liked to 'a' had; it was about three sizes smaller than a regular one. I found it ran out to a place called Lake Pontchartrain and only cost five cents. I was n't intending to go there; but it usually costs two or three dollars to ride on a steam railroad and when you can do it for five cents it would be foolish not to. So I went.

It went out back of the city and I kept looking out of the window. After we left the city the main thing we passed was a cemetery. I says to myself, "Here you are again." It seemed like cemeteries come awful easy to me, but I did n't mind it now; I was commencing to get interested in the different ones. That one was worth while; it was all little houses and rows of places; it was a cemetery without any graves in it and I found they don't have any graves in New Orleans at all. At first I thought it was just the fashion, but a fellow told me the reason was that when you dig a hole in New Orleans it fills right up with marshy water and so they could n't keep the dead people down. That is why they have them rows of places. They call them brick rows ovens on account of the way they are made, and every few years they take some out and

put the bones all together below and others moves in. Well, that was a new one on me and there was a reason in that, too; some people ain't such big fools as you 'd think at first. I wanted to go and see them; but if I had got off I would n't 'a' got my five cents' worth. So I staid on.

We went a while on a banked-up track through wet woods where nobody could live. I thought maybe the water was overflow but it was just swamp; you could tell the difference after you looked at it a while. Them woods was n't dry enough to gather hickory nuts in nor wet enough to go swimming; there was live alligators in them and they was n't even good for Sunday-school picnics. If a woods ain't good for that, what good are they?

The locomotive which pulled us was a kind that is called a dummy, but it found its way out to the end all right; it stopped on the edge of a dark-looking lake that you could n't see across. I thought at first it was swamp water too, but it was salt water. It sticks in from the Gulf of Mexico, which is a good many miles away, and if ships don't want to come up the Mississippi they can come into the city the back way. I was glad I found that out; I might 'a' missed some of the ships.

There were some little yachts in a slip and a man was monkeying with the machinery of one with a monkey-wrench; them little boats is heaps of care, they ain't old and tough like the Speed. The place was a summer, or maybe a winter, resort, but there was n't anybody there and the lake looked

dark and dismal like business was bad; the breeze was blowing a little off the water and bringing in old foam and stuff and making it look pretty swampy along shore. There was n't much but an old band-stand and a walk standing out in the water on a lot of piles like it did n't know what to do with itself; it was just like you 'd expect to see a thing standing in a swampy place with a thousand legs.

I guessed the next thing for us to do was to turn and go back; and just when I was thinking that, I come across the fellow that had the bucketful of fifty-cent alligators; they was as thick in the water as oysters in their juice and I could n't hardly tell which one of them I liked best. I asked him how much he was selling them for and he asked me how much money did I have; I told him I had thirty-five cents but five of it was n't mine by rights because it belonged to the railroad company to take me back again, so he picked me out a smart one for thirty. He could n't bite me because I knew how to catch him by the back of the neck; the man said he would n't hurt no one that way. I seen I could n't carry him that way all the time, though. I was going to put him in my pocket and only take him out when I wanted him; but if I done that and then put my hand into my dark pocket after him he would have the best of me. But I fixed that all right; I tied a string around him under his armpits and dropped him in and I tied the other end of the string in a buttonhole and wore him like a watch. Then I could take him out to see if he was dead

and he could n't do nothing but be mad about it and swim in the air. That is the best way to have an alligator. I found he was n't born at all, he was hatched out of an egg and I wondered how long it would be before he started to lay; but the man said I need n't be in a hurry; he would grow up in a hundred years.

I asked him some more questions and he said if I did n't know what to do with myself why did n't I go up to the labyrinth; and he pointed up the shore to a square place with green hedge around it. So I went.

I found the labyrinth was a place to go inside of and find if you could get out again; it was all hedges inside of a hedge. And there was a cave in the middle all made out of rocks. I bet I could pilot my way out so I found the opening in the hedge and went in. The path followed along just inside of the outer hedge and turned round the end of a hedge and come back alongside of itself with a hedge between—and every once in a while there would be an opening to go into some other path and try it if you wanted to. No matter which one you took you would end up where the path did n't go no farther. Then you would have to go back a piece and take a chance on another and then you would have a lot of more to guess on. And by that time you could n't remember how you come.

When I had been fooled about forty times I come into the cave. It was made to sit down in and take a rest and while I was doing it I took another look at the alligator. I had n't named him yet, so

I guessed the best time to do it was now where it was quiet and a good place to think up things. I thought of Fido and Rover but they would n't do and I did n't know no alligator names. You have got to get an alligator name for an alligator, and that is mighty hard because they don't take after anything. The best I could do was George; it was n't very good. It did n't sound right at first, but after I let him be it a while it done better. And afterwards I seen why it seemed to be just the right name; it was because George that used to tote sacks on the Speed had such a big mouth. Anyway, it was the best I could think up, because Rags kept barking all the time; he did n't like alligators. Then I put him back and started to get out.

There is only one way to get out of that place and it looks like there was a hundred—but all them ways is mistakes; and it is as crooked as the river I heard of where the steamboats have hinges in the middle to go round the bends. The path come to an end just when I was getting to the place to go out. I had to go back awhile and then I took my choice of an opening and went on making turns; and I come back to near the same place again. I done it again and it got to be like playing checkers with myself; and the man that built it always beat. Well, I thinks to myself, "I will beat you this time"; so I went right around and did n't go through two openings that you 'd think I would and then I went through one where you would n't be expecting me to do it; and after a while I was back in the cave again. But I would n't stay there;

I turned right around and went at it again. And no matter how different I done I would come round to one of the places I started from. The nearest I could get was to a part of the outer hedge.

A labyrinth is a good game if you could quit

"The best I could do was George"

when you want to; but you get in and then you have got to keep it up till you get out. And when you just want to go away and can't it is a nuisance. The hedge was just up to my neck so that I could look around; and I guessed the best way was to study it out till I seen my way clear. I pretty near

done it half a dozen times; but it always come out wrong.

Well, the next time I got to the outer hedge I thinks to myself, "I will put Rags out, anyway; that will be some satisfaction." I lifted him up and gave him a boost over the top; and I would 'a' done that myself but you could n't climb that hedge. What does Rags do but run right to the little opening and come in again, and I thinks to myself, "Now he will be lost, too." And there was enough of us looking for each other without having a dog in the mix-up. I could n't see him no more, but I guessed he was trying to find me somewheres in the laborinth. So I stood still and wondered what would come of it. I bet it was n't half a minute till he come trotting up my path and stopped with his tongue out and wagged his tail. I wished I knew how he got in; I bet the same way would 'a' took me out. Then I shook my finger at him and spoke cross and told him to git out of here. But that would n't work; he only laid down and made himself humble and looked disgraced. I seen that if a dog could do it there was n't any use studying it so hard; you can't figure your way out of a thing that there ain't no sense in. I just trotted around any way at all till I would come out by accident; but it was a long time happening. Then I wished that Rags would take the lead but he would n't. He did n't care whether he got out or not; he only wanted to tag around where I was. And he knew the way all the time but you could n't get it out of him; that is the way with dogs.

While I was standing thinking it over a newsboy passed outside and he asked if I was stuck and says, "Are you willing to give it up?"

"No, I won't give it up; no such thing," I says.

Then he said he knew the way. I said I bet he did n't and he said he bet he did; and he took the dare and come right in. And it did n't take him no time to come right to me.

"I done *that* myself," I says, "and I can do it again. But let 's see you *get out.*"

Then he showed me how he could do it and I went along. I was out of it, but that was n't no satisfaction; I did n't do it myself. He would n't tell me how, but when he found I was from a circus, which I proved to him by Rags, he told me mighty quick. He told me how it was one turn to the left and skip one opening and two turns to the right and skip two; and he took me in and out saying it off like a croshay book. And when I knew it he went away and I done it myself. I staid there a long time and practised till I knew all the bends and crossings and could pilot all around in it and would n't never forget it. Then we went and got on the train; there was n't no more to do out there. New Orleans is a great place and the main thing is the laborinth; it is the principal thing to see down South.

When I got back to town I was awful hungry. But it was n't any use to be hungry, because the things I had bought cost exactly as much money as I had. It was away past dinner-time and I seen I would have to go to work now and get a job quick.

I went to see if the Woodland was in and she was n't; so that settled that. Anyway, I did n't seem to notice river boats so much since I started to be a sailor. I walked up and down and kept look-

"The main thing is the laborinth"

ing at ships mostly. That "river rat" business was in my head yet, too; and I thought if I could only go one trip across the ocean I would come back and be a pilot again; then I bet nobody could say anything like that to me. I guessed maybe I better try the ships, anyway.

I tried miles and miles that afternoon, but it did n't do no good. There was brigs and barks being stuffed with cotton and big blank-sided ocean tramps loading with coal and ships of all kinds being filled with wheat and there was cat-boats and ferry-boats and fruit-boats crowded under their sterns and between; and there was a big French liner with three red stacks slanting back from the wind, and side-wheelers that could go on the Gulf, and river boats with painted eagles and things hung up like campaign banners between the stacks; there was all kinds. There was more over on the other side of the river, too. You 'd think the whole country was being emptied down the Mississippi and loaded for Europe. Who 'd 'a' thought that that wheat we had gathered along the Missouri was going off to them foreign countries. I knew this was it because the Speed always left hers in the elevator—and that is where the Woodland got it—and this is where she brought it; I seen it all myself. When I seen that wheat being loaded on I felt more like going along; travel is awful catching.

I could n't ship before the mast on account of being too small and I could n't get on a big steamer as cabin-boy because they was too high-toned and would n't take Rags; so there was n't anything to do but get another job in a cook's galley. Well, some of them cooks was cross and some was busy and some was foreigners and two was a Chinaman; I got so that I understood "No" in any language. After a while I got to feeling down in the mouth and then I noticed that they did n't pay even as

much attention to me as they did at first. It seemed as if they just looked up and knew right off it was only me. It don't pay to get down in the mouth, especially when you are busted; it makes bad luck.

By sundown I was a couple of miles away from my sleeping-place and I was so hungry I could hardly hold it. But I had a lot of ships left for to-morrow and that was a good thing. I guess Rags was kind of played out, too, because he wanted to sit down, which is the way with a spaniel when he gets fat; but I had to get back to Canal Street to go to bed.

CHAPTER XXIX

A SWEETLY SOLEMN THOUGHT

HEN I got back it was dark again and the levee was all made up for the night. The cotton bales was covered and the rows of molasses barrels had the tester's sticks stood up beside them and their bungs in tight. So I sat down to rest. The moon was right on the end of the tall black stack of the cotton compress, like it belonged there; from where I was sitting you 'd most think it come up out of the chimney. That compress had another of them steamboat chimneys with fancy points on the end, like they have on lots of factories down South; and some has a pair of them just like a steamboat. You 'd 'most expect to see a factory blow its whistle and start away up the street. The fancy points of this one bent out to hold the moon that was coming up pretty fast, like it was a bubble being blowed out of the stack. And when I looked again it had let go and was floating away.

When I had watched till I seen that was done I guessed the next thing was to go to bed, but my

"The levee was all made up for the night"

mind kept a-thinking of the molasses inside of the barrels. I went over and looked at one of the tester's sticks which had been shoved all day through bung-holes to sound the molasses and there was n't much left on; most of it had run off. But they was long, and so when I wiped the whole stick across my tongue there come a little swallow off the end, one on each side. So I went along up the levee and took what there was on each stick, which was n't stealing because nobody was going to use it, anyways; but when I was about half a block up a sailor that was walking soft back to his ship see me when I was n't noticing, and asked was I practicing to be a sword-swallower, and you bet I looked around quick. But I seen it was no policeman. So I told him I guessed maybe he thought he was awful smart, and he went on and tended to his business; you don't need pay no attention to sailors, because they have n't got nothing to say on land, anyways. I went right along and cleaned up all of them. It was as good as eating, at first, but it stopped tasting good before I was through being hungry. It was the first time I ever come to the end of molasses. Some people try to make out that sweet stuff spoils your appetite, but it did n't mine. It is kind of true, but when you try to make out it is eating, your stomach remembers about it and is dissatisfied. Lots of people believe things that they only heard.

All the same it helped me to get to sleep, which is the best way to spoil your appetite, and when I seen for sure that nobody was looking I dived under a tarpaulin and was all right again.

Well, that night I dreamed things that nobody could ever make up. It was all about cooks. There was all kinds of cooks and every blame one of them had a knife in his hand. They was all gathered together around me and holding their knives tight and telling me "No." There was big fat butchery cooks with chicken-blood on them, and there was thin, cruel-looking pirate cooks, and there was wall-eyed Chinese cooks with the expression all wiped off their faces; there was some that looked right through me and some that could n't understand nothing, but anyway they was all good and tired of me. It seemed like they all met me somewheres out on the ocean where it was all up and down waves, but at the same time it was n't on the ocean at all, it was on the land. What I done was I started to walk across the ocean and it was so uphill and slippery that I thought up a ship and got on it; and it did n't always stay a ship but would turn into a laborinth without you noticing it at all. But however it happened there was good sense in it, and the next morning I had forgot the sensible part; I could only remember pieces of the dream and they would n't fit together. I guess being so hungry disagreed with me. But that dream sounded so natural anybody would 'a' thought it was true. You would n't never stop to look into it. The next morning when I woke up and looked back I was mighty glad I got out of it all right; and I made up my mind I would n't eat no molasses for breakfast. And that was all there was, so I did n't have anything.

But the alligator and Rags was in luck. The sewers in New Orleans is just gutters flowing along each edge of the street and there was good stuff coming along. I sat down on the curbstone and let the alligator swim a while on the end of his string so he would n't dry up; and Rags stopped a couple of things that he liked. It is the easiest city to have an alligator in: down there they can have no cellars nor cisterns nor anything underground because the city is lower than the river and the ground is terrible leaky; and that is why the sewers is on top, too, which is what I say that everything is outdoorsy down there. All you have to do is to stop anywheres on the edge of the sidewalk and take out your alligator and give him a swim, and if you let him out for recess, regular, he gets along first-class. And something to eat, too; which he can suit himself.

When George and Rags was done I went over to the market eating-place just to take a look. I walked up and down between the rows of backs in the marble stalls till I 'most wished I was a horse that had a stall somewheres that I could go in and not have to pay nothing. But it did n't do no good to stay there; it only made me jealous and did n't get me nothing, so I guessed I had better go and tend to business.

I had to walk about two miles before I could begin with the ship where I left off. I kept going from one ship to another and asking the cooks and it was just like the dream I had. You can believe in dreams or not, whichever you want, but that was

one dream that come true; I did n't get no job. I kept going and going till the ships was so far apart that it did n't pay no more; and then I seen I would have to walk three or four miles to try the other end which I had n't finished up. I was getting kind of tired of being a sailor and if I had got a job maybe I would n't 'a' took it longer than a couple of meals; but when things is keeping right on getting the best of you that way and you have put so much work on it you don't like to give up.

When I got back to town I was four meals behind and it was after dinner-time. And then when I come to the fruit wharf I found out something. I found that if you go and take it off the little pile where they throw it you can have fruit to eat for nothing; a banana which is ready to eat is pulled off and got rid of because they only can ship green ones away and the people up North ripen them to suit themselves. When I seen a fellow eating one free I went to the little pile and took some, too. I kept going back every once in a while and then the man seen me. The whole shipload belonged to that stoop-shouldered little man and when he seen they was some good to me he come at me with his cane and drove me away. After that I was getting kind of disappointed. I dassent sleep under the tarpaulins and I dassent eat throwed-away bananas; I dassent do nothing because everything was so valuable.

But I had got some of them, all right. I don't know how many I ate; I went back so many times I lost track, but I bet it was a lots—that was what gave me the stomach-ache.

You see after I had sat around in the sun a while to rest up before I would go to the other end of the ships, I got a terrible pain in it. So then everything was upset and I could n't go to look for a job at all; I was worse off than when I started. I sat on the edge of the wharf and doubled up tight and tried to shut it off, but it found a way to hurt anyhow; it was like I had swallowed a toothache. After a while I laid back careless and tried to make out it was n't nothing and thought of ten dollars; but you can't get around a stomach-ache that way. When I thought hard about not having it and tried to pass it off it just started up like it knew I was n't paying it enough attention. So then I did n't try to fool it no more. I just thought of a saucerful of Missouri brandy—and that was on the square, because I did wish I had it.

While I was sitting there a fellow that was a tramp come along and sat down near me with a paper bag in his hands; I guess he wanted some company. He asked me what I was waiting for and when I told him he said that was the best thing to do because a stomach-ache always come to an end sometime and he guessed mine would. He said what can't be cured must be endured, and it was pretty true thing, because he had cured himself of lots of things that way. Well, I was glad he come to call; it done me good to talk about the stomach-ache. I found he was n't a real tramp; he was just doing anything at all till he could get a job. And I don't call anybody a tramp that is doing that; it ain't so easy to get a job right off. He had had luck just when his dinner-time was coming. He

seen a pile of wood in front of a bake shop, which is a good sign of a job, and that is how he got the bag of stuff. It was all angel food which had gone wrong. It happened that just when the angel-food had been put in the oven and was starting to rise a fellow come in to deliver a barrel of flour and he dumped it down careless on the floor, which anything like that must n't happen to disturb angel food when it is coming to the point. It is awful sensitive and delicate and that made it fall in the baking; and then it was n't light enough to sell; and the woman was awful mad at that big fellow. So she just gave it all to the tramp. He gave me a piece; but it did n't fill up much. It was a high-toned sponge cake that is good to eat afterwards.

"I wish," I says, "that the fellow had let two barrels fall; maybe that would 'a' got it solider so it would fill up with less chewing, like bread."

"I guess an earthquake would n't 'a' hurt it none. That might 'a' made it about right for us," he says.

He gave me another piece but that did n't do much good; and then he could n't spare any more; he said he found it did n't go as far as he expected. When he was through with dinner he got up to go and look for supper and I said I was glad I met him and he said he was glad he met me. Then he told me to not mind the stomach-ache and went away.

The ache would stop a while like it was going to let up; and just when I decided it was through it

would start fooling around inside of me again. After a while I did n't trust it. I had to sit there and stand it till it was 'most evening; I wished it was like a snake that would die when the sun went down. But it kept squirming once in a while after it was most done for.

When it was after dusk there come along a gang of sailors; and the fellow with ear-rings in his ears hailed me and said "Hello"; so I went along and joined in with them. They went down the levee till they come to a saloon; then everybody stopped and asked everybody to have a drink. That would be eleven drinks apiece right there, not counting me. But I was supposed to be along with somebody, so I went in, too. The waiter did n't count me at first, till one of the sailors asked the other one why he did n't see that his friend's friend was waited on, and after that I belonged; and I took my brandy in a glass like the rest of them, because it was the French kind, and it would be more polite. But if it was French it knew its business just like the kind from Missouri; it stopped my stomach-ache at a quarter past nine.

There was all kinds of sailors sitting around the tables, some in blue jackets with brass buttons from the big steamer and some in regular sailor clothes which they are so used to they can keep their pants right up without a belt or nothing; and money was a-going free. When the fourth and fifth fellows at our table set them up, I took a little each time—but it cost just as much—and it woke up my appetite again. And when the sixth fellow seen his chance

to order again they asked me what I was a-going to have; and I said I guessed I would just take the ten cents. Well, you would 'a' thought I done something awful the way everybody looked; so right away I said I guessed I would change it for ginger-ale. Of course I know that they don't usually do that way I guess I know as much about being polite as anybody—but if I would rather have the ten cents what difference would it ought make by rights to them? But I did n't say nothing when I seen they was shocked; I just drank the ale. While I was drinking it I got to counting up, and I seen that when all the eleven had treated once it would be anyway one hundred and twenty-one drinks, which is twelve dollars and ten cents, and I did n't have so much time to spare. So I called Rags from under the table where he had gone to get away from a sailor that was too familiar, and then I excused myself polite and said I was much obliged and went.

By that time the moon had got away up, so I laid low awhile and seen my chance to go to bed. There was a little patch on the tarpaulin that had come unsewed; it was like a window in my roof and was good to look up through. I laid on my back awhile looking at a couple of stars and got to thinking of them things; but after awhile I did n't like them stars very well, so I moved over a little and watched the moon making time. She was going along about as swift as a raft a couple of miles off, and when she was past I would move over a couple of inches and get a line on her again. It is funny how they

"I guessed I would just take the ten cents"

all move along together by themselves and make regular trips that way; I guess there must be some kind of a current up there to drift them all along like that.

When the moon had crowded me over to the edge of the bale I 'most fell off; my head was feeling queer, so I guessed I had better stop looking at the moon and go to sleep. After I was asleep I had a dream that was different than any; I dreamt that my head was getting bigger and bigger. When it was so big I could n't 'a' stood up with it I lost my hold on something and started to fall. And instead of falling down I fell up; it is a wonder I did n't bump into a star. I guess it was from looking up so much that it seemed like looking down; anyway, I am glad things are fixed so that you don't fall up instead of down, I would hate to get started. My head kept getting bigger but I did n't know any more than I did before. I don't even know what the rest of the dream was with all my head was so big. Once in the night I dreamed something that scared myself and I woke up quick. My head was all sore inside like my brains had took too much exercise; I must 'a' thought up a lots. My head felt big yet from the dream, so I laid till I would get woke up out of it and start sleeping different.

CHAPTER XXX

CLANCY BOBS UP AGAIN

WHILE I was laying there in the dark I heard a noise moving around outside like it belonged to something. And I says to myself, "What is that?" I sat up careful and looked through my peep-hole, and that time I seen a star as big as your fist; it was a nickel-plated one. The policeman was standing bouncing his club on the wharf. it would strike on one end and then the other with a woody ring and at the same time he would jerk the cord and it would jump back to his hand as straight as if it was a ball; I guess he was practising hitting people that was getting away, he could do it good. I wished he would go away.

I looked up through the little hole and the moon was gone, so I guessed it must be getting along towards morning. Then I watched him again. When he was through practising he took his club and hit on the head of a loud, empty barrel. Then I heard an answer away up the levee—a hit just

like his. He gave a couple of hits back and the other one done the same; you 'd think they was pilots arguing on their whistles about who was to have their rights. I could 'a' understood what they was saying if it had n't been clubs.

"I am going to pass you to the right"—"No I want that side to make a landing"—"All right; have it your own way"—"I understand that you understand what I mean, then; let her go at that"—that was what they was saying. But I guess they must 'a' meant something else, because the up-river policeman kept hitting the wharf once in a while. You could tell he was coming in the dark. Then he hove in sight beside the other policeman. They did n't say nothing at all; they just parted their coats behind and sat down together with the tails in their laps. They did n't say nothing for a while. Then one of them says:

"How is 't, Mooney?"

"No'thin' doin'," he says.

I listened to that; then I kept close to my hole to hear if they would say anything else. They did n't say nothing for a while. Then Mooney felt in the tail of his coat and took out a lot of bananas. He laid them on the barrel and helped himself to one.

"Have wan, McGee," he says.

McGee he took one. He laid the peelings back careful with the white part sticking up in the middle; it looked like a fat lily. Then he put it to his mouth and when he took it away it was half gone. I was glad to see that. I was glad he took

such big bites; he would n't be fooling around there so long. The up-river policeman done it, too.

"Have a red wan, McGee."

"Don't care if I do," he says. And he took another. When he had it half skinned he held it up before him; but he did n't bite right away. He used it to make motions with while he said something. I could n't hear all of what it was; sometimes I would get a few words, but they would n't mean much without the others. Then McGee spoke louder.

"Jerry is back on Truck Eight, agin."

"Ye don't tell me! Did n't th' butther route suit him?"

"He did n't suit th' business."

"Ye don't tell me! 'T is quare. He said th' other felly med money out av it."

"But not Jerry; he did n't know th' saycrits."

"Is there saycrits in that?"

"There was wan av thim; an' that was enough. Th' other felly had a tin tube that he would shove down into a jar av it; and he wud pull out a plug to show how he was honest an' 't was good all th' ways to th' bottom. An' so it was—in that place. But 't was not good all th' way around. Jerry done part av it all right, but he did n't—"; and then I did n't hear some more. The down-river policeman would start out with a pretty good voice; but before he was through sometimes he would nudge up and get familiar and end up in a secret whisper. Sometimes he was right out with it and sometimes he talked that Irish way.

"He 'll niver make a business man."

"He has too big a hear-r-rt. He had betther drive th' thruck an' be a fireman—He 'll not be puttin' on an exthry dab iv THAT ivery time a lady smiles at him. These are nice mealy banannys, Mooney."

"They 're that. Ye can make a meal aff th' likes av thim. 'T is a pity Ireland was not down where th' ready eatin' grows for nothin'. An' that by th' tree-load. Who was tellin' it to ye, about Jerry?"

"He come to swim last night and he tould it me himsilf. He 's not ashamed av bein' too honest, if it did bring him to disgrace—so says he."

He took another banana. The way they was eating fruit made me sick to look at them.

"Swimmin'," says Mooney. "There was a felly up at my place the other night could bate him at that. And divin'."

" 'T wud be hard to bate Jerry at that. He can go aff the side av a ship."

"This felly can go aff th' yard-arm—Yis, he can do that. Oh my, he is wontherful, McGee—he is wontherful. Why, he can go aff th'—"; and I did n't hear no more of that. You bet I wanted to hear all they would say about that; but I could n't listen hard enough. Just when I would be holding my breath his voice would go and I would miss maybe the principal part. The fellow had quit his job—I made that out. I got a word here and there—and when I put it all together it was Clancy. Leastways, I thought it was. I wanted

to jump right out through that hole and say—Where?

But I could n't do nothing like that; they was policemen. Suppose I went out and says, "Would you mind telling me who this fellow is? Maybe I am looking for him"—that would n't do. Then they would have me. I must keep away from them and not let them know I was sleeping here nights, and I must go out and ask them about what they was talking about; that 's the way it looked to me. There was something for me to think out. But I was a long time doing it. And then I did n't. I would start at the beginning and look it over both sides, fair and square; and just when I would come to the point where I ought to know, I would n't have the answer. I thought I would be willing to take the risk if I could only find Clancy; but there might be some mistake. I knew it was him, but I was n't sure. And then I would be arrested. I tried to work it out five or six times but I always had to start over. And while I was doing it the up-river policeman got up and went away.

Then the other policeman got up and stretched himself. He went and hit on a tarpaulin like he thought somebody might be under it. I laid low. Next I heard him give mine a rap. He come along and give it another and that time he hit right over Rags. Rags got mad right away; he got up and growled and barked terrible. Rags was so used to sleeping there he thought it was our place and nobody did n't have no business to come fooling around; he was ready to eat somebody up. And

the next I knew the cover was turned back and there I was without any tarpaulin over me.

"Well?" he says.

I did n't say nothing. I did n't know what.

"Yer dog is a good watcher," he says.

"Yes, sir," I says.

"What are ye doin' here?"

"Nothin'," I says.

"Have ye no frinds? Come now," he says.

"No, sir," I says.

"Ye have none. How long have ye been here? Come now," he says.

"Three nights," I says.

"What have ye been livin' on? Come now," he says.

"I did n't take nothin'—only some molasses," I says.

"Oho—Ye did, did ye? D' ye know I cud take ye in f'r that? I cud arrist ye for larceny. An' th' judge wud be like to make it MOlarseny. D' ye know that?"

"Yes, sir," I says.

"D' ye know ye are outside th' pale av th' law?"

"Yes, sir," I says.

Rags wanted us to fight. He was walking around and growling inside of himself.

"Come on over here," he says; and he put his hand on me. And when he done that Rags jumped in and went right at his legs. The policeman threw his club the way I seen him practising; but he could n't hit Rags. Rags was n't so slow when he meant business. He dodged away and growled so loud I

guess he must 'a' heard it himself; and he watched for a good chance to come back.

"Make yer dog be shtill; he is makin' too much noise."

So I hollered it at him to lay down. And he done it.

"D' ye have to call like that to make him mind?"

"Yes, sir," I says.

"Come over now till I take a look at ye," he says. He sat down on a barrel and let me stand in front of him; and he made me answer questions about where I come from and what I done. He asked the questions awful quick and every time he said "Come now." But I seen why he did that. He did n't want me to have time to make up anything.

"So ye 're from Missouri. And ye are goin' to France. I suppose ye 'd go up in a balloon too—only ye niver thought av it. An' th' boat ye belong on is gone away. D' ye know I have a mind to arrist ye for that?"

"No, sir," I says.

"What? Ye don't; don't ye?"

"Yes, sir," I says.

I was tired hearing myself say it. Rags he was laying low; but he could n't stop off growling.

"And ye have no frinds at all?"

"I was maybe going to have one this winter," I says. So then I seen my chance. I got around to asking what him and the other policeman was talking about. But he did n't know nothing about Clancy. He said the other policeman did n't,

neither. He said a fellow like that just come along one time to go swimming and he made himself acquainted a little. So then I knew it was Clancy.

"Mooney wud know no more about him. He only seen him th' wanst," he says. "Go back now and get into yer bed. And don't let me see ye doin' it, aither. An' don't let me catch ye goin' to France agin. D' ye mind that?"

"Yes, sir," I says.

"Go back and get in it now. An' whin ye 're in don't let me know ye 're there."

"Yes, sir," I says. And then he stood where he could see me get out of his sight and went away.

I guess I must 'a' gone to sleep again. Because I remember hearing somebody call to me five or six times before I noticed it. When I come to and knew it I heard a voice at the little hole.

"Are ye at home?"

"Yes, sir," I says.

"Then tell your dog it 's me. An' make him kape shtill." And then he threw the tarpaulin back and handed me a big sandwich.

"Take that and ate it. See that ye do it, now." Then he stood and watched me to see that I done it. You bet I done it; I guess he thought I was awful good at minding.

"I have asked Mooney about th' fellow."

"Was it Clancy?" I says.

"He raymimbers 't was that name or was just like it. He had quit his job. Him and th' boss did n't get along together, he was sayin'. Mooney thinks mabby he has gone up North to work. He

"'Are ye at home?'"

was talkin' about St. Louis. But Mooney did n't see him but th' wanst."

I had to swallow hard on the last bite of bread; it went down like a lump. The policeman took hold of the corner of the canvas again—and he kept his eye on Rags. "I 'll now be puttin' it back," he says. "An' don't ye be kickin' th' cover off th' cotton." And he threw it over us again.

Well, I thinks to myself, "What else would anybody expect? That is just the way. Here I come twelve hundred miles to find Clancy. And just when I am going to find him again he is gone. I guess he has struck out for St. Louis, and he will be going to the Speed to see Rags. But how could I 'a' knowed that? If a fellow ever had as much good luck as he has bad he would n't believe it."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TRAIL LEADS UPWARD

DIDN'T sleep no more; I just laid and let it get daylight. And when it was commencing to light up some I went across the levee and across the road and sat down by a big brick building. George took his swim and I had to hold Rags back because he wanted George for breakfast; and while he was soaking himself I made up my mind what to do next. I says to myself, "Look a' here, Sam Daly: as like as not if you was up in St. Louis it would turn out that there was a mistake and Clancy had n't left here yet at all. That 's just about the way it would be. So you better get the best of it while you have a chance."

That looked pretty sensible to me. Anyway, I could n't get away from here till the Woodland come back so I might as well put in the time look-

ing for him; you have got to take your chances. I wished I had saved my sandwich till now.

While I was sitting there the wide doors of the brick building was thrown open and a nigger quartette come and took their places before the big compress. It had a cylinder like a steamship—maybe bigger. The steam was turned on and it shoved down an iron plate and squeezed a whole wagon-load of cotton so many sizes smaller you would n't know where it went to; and when it was a bale ready to put the bands on the niggers began to hoop her up and sing. All together they put the hoops through the slot and brought them over and bent them down and buckled the ends—there was a nigger to every hoop and a motion to every word—and the bale was finished and tumbled off just when the song was done. The big cylinder sucked the plate away up into the air again and come down on another load; and they all started in on the first word and sung off another. I watched them do eighteen or twenty; then I was tired of the song.

It was lightening up more and pretty soon the sun was turned on and the levee was started up. There was niggers tumbling the bales around with their hooks, and barrels a-rolling, and the testers shoving their sticks into bung-holes, and mates a-cussing, and fruit coming ashore, and the white stevedores stuffing the ships—and a nigger mammy come and sat under her umbrella and started to sell goodies. The drays was coming more and more and turning in off Canal Street; they had two and

three mules hitched in procession—which I guess is the best way to get through crowded places. I could n't hardly remember that a little while ago it was all quiet and only me.

It was getting pretty lively; so I took George and put him back again and I went to the foot of Canal Street. And there they was a-coming—wagons and trucks and two-wheeled drays with their tails most draggling on the ground. The main channel was full of them—I guess Canal Street is the Mississippi of that town and the other streets was emptying into it. The current would divide when they come to Henry Clay on his monument and the loads would go on each side like he was an island in the street; then they would come together in one stream again and keep going to where Canal Street empties into the Mississippi. That street would choke up its mouth if it was n't for the levee stretching along the river to hold the cotton and molasses and fruit; that is what the levee is for.

It seemed like you ought to be able to find most anybody on that street if you kept looking; so I began at Number one and started up it. Them first numbers was all low-down saloons; the lower the number was the worse they got. I went into one of them places. The reason of it was I seen a sign that said "Free Lunch." So I did n't mind if I took some. There was men in there which was drunk and sleepy from the night before, but some was beginning to wake up and get a drink again. There was some sitting round like rag men that

sit most anyways on a chair; and there was some standing up pretty unsteady with their hands on the railing that is put around saloon bars to keep yourself from falling. And they was all holding to it like it was a ship in a storm.

The free lunch it was on the corner of the bar, but when I got good and started I found it was all a mistake; it was only free to them that spent money. The bartender looked at me and told me to keep hands off, so I done it. Back of the saloon was a kind of a yard that had a wall around it and was paved with brick; and there was some laying around in that place, too; they was all ragged and sour-smelling, with their faces dirty and scratched. That was handy for the saloon-keeper when he had a man on his hands; he could put him back there and be rid of him. And when he come to he would be glad he was treated right and not put out; then they would have him again.

Upstairs there was some old bare, musty rooms with the paper peeling off the walls; and that place was good at night or when it was raining. And if you come there regular to get drunk you could have some lunch and sleep for nothing, unless you had ten cents.

There was a fellow in pretty good black clothes that was all dirty; he was sitting stooped on a chair making motions and mumbling to himself. I heard a fellow telling about him and who he was. His folks was well-off and was a good family; and he had money every month that was his share. His folks took the money for him and paid the

saloon-keeper in advance. You see he was n't fit to take his money around to different saloons; so this way he would stay in a place that suited him and not go around getting into trouble and showing himself. Once he was a clerk in a bank, but he got to going down till he had to have whiskey all the time and would stay drunk anyways; so

"Once he was a clerk in a bank"

this was the best way. They would n't have him sitting around like that in decent saloons, anyhow; so his folks deposited his money in this saloon and then he could stay and draw his whiskey over that bar. That way his folks would know he was n't in danger carrying money and was out of harm in a place that suited him. That was a pretty good way. Lots of folks ought to do it on contract that

way. They might as well have their wages just paid to the saloon-keeper; it would save them from troubling with the money. Besides, it would go farther, too.

Some ways it was worse than a pig-pen; Rags did n't like it neither, because he could see they was n't acting sensible. So we got out of there; and I guessed I would n't go into any of them others. More had come into the barroom and was hanging to the life-line. The bank clerk was making foolish motions and talking crazy stuff; I guess he thought folks was listening to him.

Most of the little stores along there kept lottery tickets to sell. You could get a big chance for five dollars or a little chance for two bits, which is twenty-five cents. The first one I come to had a sign out on wrapping paper saying that this was the place that won a prize in the last drawing. There was a couple of darkies going in to get a ticket in the week drawing for two bits, and there was a white man coming out with a ticket in the month drawing, and there was customers hanging around outside looking at the lucky number in the show window and thinking it over. Some was showing their tickets and looking at them and wondering if the one they had was a winner. A steamboat nigger had won $100 last week and he had rigged himself up in clothes that would make you look; I guess he was n't going to work no more. He was talking loud and bragging how he done it.

Next I come to one that had a sign out telling

about how they won a thousand dollars for a customer. But I guess they did n't know it when they sold him the ticket. There was a lot hanging around and going in and out of that place, too, getting bargains; I found out some did n't work at nothing else except when they was busted. Then they would have to work some to win twenty-five cents for a new start. One fellow had won five dollars and he did n't know whether he had better buy a big chance or a dozen of the other kind; but he spent it on the week drawing because it come quicker. Another was going to buy a ten-dollar chance in partners with his friend, and they was trying to guess which place was the luckiest. They went into the place that had won the biggest the last time.

Then I come to another that did n't say it had won anything, but just advertised that it was going to be lucky. You could buy lottery tickets most anywheres and there was lots that had bought tickets hanging around and talking about their investments; I guess they thought it was n't worth while to go to work if they was maybe going to be rich. They was just standing around and hoping.

Well, I rambled along Canal Street and went off it, sometimes one side and sometimes the other, but I always steered back into the main channel again. There was old-looking places with French-sounding signs above the doors and sometimes narrow streets with green shutters at your elbows. After a while I come to where some wide stone steps led from the street inside of a building, as if they

expected everybody to go right up them; and there was no sign but a gold Six over them, as if everybody knew what it was. So I guessed to myself I would go and see. Number Six was a fine marble hall; I never seen nothing to beat it except maybe church, and there was gentlemen playing for money all over. Anybody could just step right in and do some gambling. After a while I come to another that had a different number and it was the same, so I did n't try no more; it was like everybody kept their money in a fine bank and then played cards to see who could draw it out. Some of them men was serious and respectable, like bankers; you could see they had big responsibilities.

The more I got away from the levee it got to be more respectable drinkers and more respectable gamblers. I bet that bank clerk that I seen was a high-toned one when he started. But he did n't have enough sense; so he kept going down till he got to the river and could n't go no farther.

After a while I come out onto Canal Street on a corner where a newsboy was chewing a one-cent joint of sugar-cane; he had spit the strings of it all out around him and was making a horse jealous. I stood and talked to him and he made so much noise sucking the juice and chewing it out that I could n't think of nothing else but eating. I was so hungry I felt lonesome. I could n't think of no place where it seemed I wanted to go but back to the levee where I had the sandwich, it seemed more like home; so I went back. But all the time I was keeping my eye out for Claney.

I leaned a while into the big door of the compress again and watched them hooping the bales. They was doing them all with the same song yet; I would think they ought to get tired singing it for so many thousands of them. But that is to keep the cotton a-going for all over the world; and that song is just the right length to go round a bale and fasten the end, and it fits into every part of the work. If it was n't that it belongs to the trade I guess they would change it. But a song that was made to haul a rope or turn a capstan would n't put no bands on a bale of cotton and get it done in time. I got so I was n't interested hearing it again so I guessed I would go away from it.

I called Rags, but he did n't come along. Then I seen that he had come across an old throwed-away coat on the edge of the sidewalk beside a paint bucket, and he had took it to lay down on. I called him again but he did n't come; I thought he was getting harder of hearing. So I hollered awful loud and that time I seen he heard me by the end of his tail; but he never paid no more attention. I says to myself, "He thinks all clothes has got to be watched whether anybody is in swimming or not; Clancy raised him that way. And he has got so a coat looks like home to him."

When he would n't come I went and tried to lead him by the ear. But he held back and just let me pull it. I pulled it so hard I could feel it hurt him and had to stop; but he would n't budge. I guess he would 'a' let me pull it off and just whine. So I went off a piece and took George out

and called him a nice alligator, and then you bet Rags pricked up his ears and started to pay attention. And he come right away to see about it. He

"I bet he would 'a' bit"

fooled around and growled till I put George back into the pocket again. And then what does Rags do but run right back and flop down on the coat again.

I went then and slapped him on the short hair

and told him what was what; and I pulled his ear good. When I slapped him he scrouched down and flattened himself like it was something awful I was going to do to him; I could see he would 'a' done anything I wanted except what he did n't want to. There was n't nothing for me to do but drag him along; so I took a-hold of both of his ears. And just as I was getting the best of him he growled and got savage and I bet he would 'a' bit. When he growled like he meant it I could n't hardly believe what I heard. He had turned right into a different dog.

Well, when he looked different and growled at me like that I let go. I went off a piece and tried to make him out. There is tramp curs that will live with you and turn on you that way; but I never thought Rags had a streak in him like that. Most of them dogs that will growl at their boss is cowards with everybody else; and he never was that way. And a dog that is awful humble at home will sometimes go out and whip anything on the street; and that is the kind he was. So I could n't make him out at all; it was n't natural. Anyways, it was n't dog nature.

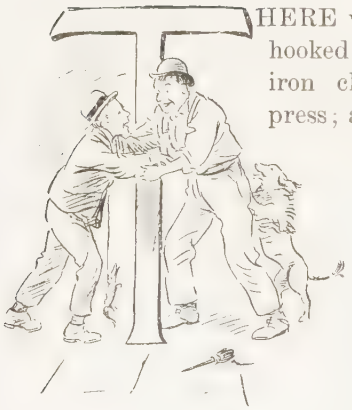
I thinks to myself, I will show you; I will go away as if I did n't care a cent. So I started and went right across the street and half across the levee. And when I looked back he was laying there resting his chin on the sidewalk as contented as could be; he was looking after me with only one eye as if HE did n't care a cent. Well, that was too much for me; I could n't make it out; it did n't

seem dog nature. It makes you feel awful bad when your dog goes back on you like that. You 'd 'a' thought he decided it was n't worth while following me that did n't belong nowheres and was just rambling around. I come to a stop; and then when I tried to think it out it come into my mind all of a sudden—maybe it was CLANCY'S COAT. I looked this way and that and all around—but I did n't see no Clancy.

Then I looked up. And there he was—anyways, I bet it was him.

CHAPTER XXXII

OH-H-H CLANCY!



THERE was a kind of a swing hooked over the top of the iron chimney of the compress; and somebody was sitting up there in the swing painting black.

Right away I went over to the building and asked which was the way to the roof; and I was hoping it was him. I inquired my way up a lot of stairs and a ladder and come out on top. Then I looked up again and seen for sure it was him. But this time he did n't get away. You see, I had him treed.

"Oh, Clancy!" I says.

Well, he did n't know me at first. He was n't expecting to see me here; and besides he had never met me but a day. So when I told him I was Sam he did n't do nothing but look down and wonder; he called everybody Sam. But when I told him I had Rags down-stairs, and that I was from St.

"'Oh, Clancy!' I says"

Louis, he saw right away it was me. I guess he would 'a' shook hands only he was twenty feet up. But he looked friendly; he said that from looking at me endways he did n't place me right away and he would n't 'a' knowed me only for my face; but

he said he would meet me when he had painted down that far.

I stood on the roof and started to tell him how I was hunting him and what I come for. He did n't pay much attention at first but kept painting, and did n't seem to think it was nothing but me talking. But when he commenced to see it was something important he stopped and listened. So I hollered up to him all about Valdes and his wife and how they got parted and lost from each other and the whole business. He did n't exactly understand what it was all about or what he had to do with it; he started to painting again as if I had just a fool notion about nothing. But when I hollered up about the bore-hole he seen there might be some sense to it, 'specially the five hundred dollars; he listened close and stopped chewing so he could think. And then I told him how many meals I was behind. When he heard about that he took out a quarter and dropped it down. That quarter fell on the roof as if it was a dollar; it was like getting money from heaven. I did n't stop to tell him no more. And when I was going he hollered after me to come back at noon.

I went and got into a stall and made them wait on me a whole twenty-five cents worth. I was through in a little while—the waiter looked at the plate when I come out and said it was a pretty quick, clean job of eating—and then I went back to the compress. When I got to the big doors I met Clancy with Rags jumping up against him. He was just going to dinner and he asked me to

come along; so I said all right. I told him I just had one dinner but I did n't mind if I took another. And he said that was all right; eating would n't hurt nobody if they did n't begin too young. So I went.

He picked up his corduroy coat and put it on his arm and said he guessed we better go to the same place I ate. Clancy never cared much for coats except just to have one; he was so used to working out in his shirt-sleeves that he just took it on his arm instead of an umbrella if it rained. Between times it was mostly good for Rags to watch. While we was going over I showed him the alligator and told him the main part of the other things; and he said that finding the wife of Valdes would n't be hard if she was the one he knew about; she lived right near there. Anyway, we would go that night and see if she meant the same borehole; maybe she did and then it would be her.

When we got to the market I could n't tell him no more about things on account of the marble slab being between our two eating-places. Rags went in his and sat under him. I took more time to taste what I was eating this time, but I got through first, and then when Clancy was through he had to go right back to work. He said he had took the painting on contract and so he wanted to make a good job of it; it was n't like working for somebody else that is running the job. So on accounts of him not having any boss he had to hurry right back and not be killing time.

That afternoon I just sat around on the levee

and felt pretty comfortable and settled down with the two dinners inside of me; I staid around the cotton bales or the fruit piles and watched them working wherever I pleased. Rags he staid and watched the coat. I could go a block or two away and see Clancy just the same. Once in a while I would look and see how far he had moved down; he was like a clock in a steeple.

Late that afternoon he had the chimney like a new-shined boot, so he come down and took me home where his room was. We went a few squares and turned into a door on Canal Street and up some stairs to a hall with oil-cloth on it; then he unlocked the door and threw his coat on a chair and Rags got up on it. So I had to sit on the bed. But Clancy poured some water out of the pitcher and washed up.

The bed had a pink business overhead like a square umbrella; it made you remember when you used to sleep in a buggy. It was made out of some silky stuff that was all puckered toward each other and exploded out from a button in the middle: it looked like it was pretty high-toned for Clancy. But he said it was n't; he asked if I had n't took notice that all the beds down there was like that. I had n't seen no bed since I come there. So how could I notice it? He said it was n't nothing; they had them canopies whether the beds was good or not; and his was pretty bad. He could n't sleep comfortable in it. The fellow that was there before him was a steady boarder that always laid the same way, and his shape did n't fit Clancy.

He said you would n't know it to look at it—it only sagged a little in the middle; but after you got in you could feel that it was the other fellow's shape. It would n't give him no rest unless he doubled his legs up the same way; and he did n't like that way if he was taking first choice. But he had n't put in any complaints about it because the woman was doing the best she could and was trying to get a living. He said he would 'a' put in a kick and left if it was n't for that; she was a mighty square old lady.

That place used to have a ghost, too. But that was away back when it used to be a private residence. Clancy said that after it was turned into a boarding-house the ghost left. He said he did n't blame it none; if he was a ghost he would move into a family, too. He said if he ever got that five hundred for finding the woman he would go home and visit his mother a while like she wanted him to; he was getting tired of sleeping after other people all the time. There ain't no place like home where things is used to you. It was a pretty narrow bed, so I got to thinking that maybe I would make it uncomfortable sleeping in it too, but he said not to worry about that.

"That don't make any difference," he says. "I have to sleep to one side, anyways; I quit trying to use the whole bed. We can each sleep on the outside and let the other guy HAVE the middle if he wants it." You 'd 'a' thought from what he said the boarder that died was a ghost, too. Clancy said he died; that was how he come to stop boarding there.

When he had his face washed he lit the kerosene lamp and set it on the little stand and set down beside me on the bed; then he said for me to start in and tell him the whole business just like it was. So I done it. I told him everything. And what he did n't know about he thought to ask. He could n't exactly understand how Valdes let himself get separated from his wife that way; he wanted to know why he did n't do this and why he did n't do that till he got me tangled. Then he said it looked pretty complicated.

"All I know is that them things happened that way and they got apart. If things did n't do that way sometimes there would n't never BE no mix-ups," I says.

"Right you are," he says; and then he did n't ask me no more that I could n't answer.

What he wanted to know mostly was about the woman. So I thought up all about her; I even got down to telling about the toy house she made for the nigger boy and the grape-vine picture-frames and how she kept waiting for Valdes and thinking everything would turn out all right.

"It looks to me," he says, "as if she was a pretty square lady."

After that he did n't seem to be much interested in Valdes—except that he had so much money. It did n't look right, he said, for a man to be going around as if it was Saturday night all the time and his wife not getting a dollar of it. But I told him Valdes would give her plenty if he found her. "That valise was only his pocket-book," I says.

"His main money was in the bank and places. He says to me that he only brought that along to give her. His name was good for money anywheres; I guess he could 'a' wrote her a check."

"Check nothin'," says Clancy. "That would n't be no way for a man to come back. I would bring back a trunkful of the real goods. Would I write my old lady a check like I was paying her off?—I should say not. I 'd open the lid and tell her to help herself. What good is a check to a woman that can't go into a saloon and drink enough to get it cashed? I can see how that Valdes had it figured out all right. We 'll have to try and put him in line with her."

"Do you think it is the same woman you knew?" I says.

"I did n't really know her," he says. "She kind of took a liking to me, but when I had roomed there three days I got a job in Tennessee; that 's when I went to work on the viaduct. But the little girl I seen was about seventeen or twenty—if she was the same one you 're talking about."

"Of course," I says. "That's on accounts of it being so much time since Valdes went away. She would have to get old since, would n't she?"

"Correct," he says. He got right up and changed his shirt and put on his other clothes. Clancy had a mighty good black suit when he wanted to go and see anybody. It was a fine smooth basket-work kind of cloth; and he looked all dressed-up in it. He put on his stiff hat and spit out his chew and says, "Come along."

We went up the street in the direction away from the river. There was a lot of people out walking by gas-light and some looking into the lit-up windows at bedroom sets and things. But Clancy looked as good as any of them and I told him his suit was fine.

"This here is an imported suit," he says; "I took it over to England and I brought it back again."

He showed them English some things that they won't forget; and while he was walking along he told me how it happened. You see the way it happened was this. Since I seen him last Clancy worked his way over to England firing the boilers on a steamship—they called him a stoker. It was too warm to wear many clothes at that job, and afterwards he felt he had swum across in his own sweat. He did n't see no ocean scenery going over on accounts of being two or three stories down in the basement of the ship; he just staid down there and kept on stoking and after a while the whistle blew for England. England is an island. I never knew that before; I always thought it was a country. As soon as they made the landing Clancy come up out of the stoke-hole and quit his job; then he washed his face and put on his clothes and stepped off onto England. When he had looked around a little he guessed he would stay a while, so he went around to different iron-working places —and asked for a job. They did n't seem to need him. At one place they was short a man and Clancy said he would take it at the regular wages

whatever they called it in their money; but he did n't get it. Everywhere he went it was the same. The boss would come out for a minute and then go away and leave Clancy standing as if he was n't interested in him. One boss said he needed a man but he guessed Clancy could n't do that kind of work; he did n't say why. Clancy told him to be a sport and take a chance on him; but he would n't. Every place Clancy went they acted as if it was a mistake and he had called at the wrong place.

That was a new one on Clancy; he could n't understand what was the matter. Clancy could always brace into the office and put on a front that would land him a job most every time; and afterwards he would pitch in and hold it too. But over there he did n't seem to know the combination. He pretty near wore his heels off and did n't strike nothing. Between times he went around and looked at all the curiosities and the places that used to be important; and he mixed up with the other fellows that was out of a job. But he did n't take much to them; they was just emigrants that had n't come over yet.

One day he was in a tavern saloon talking to the bar-lady and telling her the saloons over there ought to take ice and learn the business; and while he was talking about America a fellow that was sitting at a table got right up and hit him on the back and called him partner. The fellow was from Passaic Falls. He was over there working on a big smoke-stack. Clancy and him bought each other

a drink and then Clancy asked him what was the matter with things over there.

"You won't never get a job if you go around this way," the fellow says. "Get yourself a leather apron—I 'll lend you one."

"And go around the street in it?" says Clancy.

"Go right there in it—and a loppy old cap and a pipe and things. Try it and see the difference. You don't look like you belonged in your class."

Well, Clancy tumbled right away.

"I 'm dead next," he says. "You 've got to be a boiler maker or a blacksmith all the time over here. It 's my lightning-change act they can't stand for. I see."

Clancy went and got his candle-end right back from the bar-lady. He had already paid for it; they had it down on the bill separate and when Clancy seen that he gave her the stump of it for a present seeing it was so valuable. So he asked her to give it back again and he went up to his room. He made up his mind he would do anything to get a job if he quit it the next day; he did n't like to let a country turn him down that way. He lit the candle end smoked his face with it till he looked like it had been worked into his hide for months at a time; and he put some extra finger marks on his nose and the side of his jaw. The New Jersey fellow got him the other things and made him up like one of his class. Clancy handled himself some more with his smoky hands and when he looked in the glass he could see himself away down at the foot of his class.

"Now you go and make a try," says the New Jersey fellow.

So Clancy done it. He went right back to the place where they would n't listen to him and got

"'Go and make a try'"

the job right away. The boss did n't know it was him. He made up his mind he would show them a thing or two and then tell them something.

Things turned out better than he expected.

Clancy's job was to tend to the tools in a shop where they worked piece-work. The more work the men did the more they got, and the less they did the less they got. Clancy kept the tools so good all the time that their wages started to go up. When he seen that he just dug in and kept them better. He knew how to sharpen a scraper so that it would take off the iron twice as quick as they was used to and easier; he done things the best he could all the time. It was like Clancy had come in and give them all a raise in wages. They all said he was the best they ever had; and the boss knew it, too.

When the time come for him to quit he went around and bid them all good-bye. When they found he meant it they all got together and decided what they would do. They decided they would each chip in a penny a day out of their own pockets; they could afford to do it better than to have their wages go down. That would 'a' put his wages away up to more than any boss would 'a' paid. No boss would 'a' thought he was worth it. But they did. When he seen they was so square he hated to go and quit them; but he did n't want to stay there in that country all the time, anyway, and he told them so. They asked him to think it over and they would send the committee around to him. But when the committee come he told them just how it was. "Well, gents," he says, "I hate to make a cut in your wages but I have got to do it. It 's really the fellow in the office that I hired out to, and I have been looking forward to quitting

him. If it was n't for that I would stay. But I am going to quit; I am going to tell the boss I don't like the cut of his whiskers and that I can't work for him; then I am going to blow for the old U. S."

So he done it. He went home first and dressed all up just to come back and do it. The boss did n't know him again; he had to introduce himself before he could quit. You see Clancy had took a shave and roached his hair; and he had put on a buttonhole bouquet, and a little bendy cane that was only good to point at the sights with, and a silk handkerchief that stuck out of the corner of his pocket—he slicked up to beat the band. He got a cigarette too and stuck it on his lower lip so that it hung down careless-like; so when he shoved his head and elbows into the money-window and rested himself on the shelf and said it was pretty medium weather outside, but kind of foggy, the boss did n't know who he was; he thought it was somebody come to give a big order. The boss got right up and smiled and flunkied; Clancy shook hands and said how he regretted that he would have to bust the relations between them and be hands across the sea. The boss did n't get onto his line of talk right away. When he tumbled he set his eyes and crawled back into himself and put his politeness in cold storage again; but that did n't faze Clancy none. He leaned in farther and rested himself on the shelf and did n't seem to notice it. He talked so high-toned he froze the boss stiff and then he threw out the hot air till he thawed him

out again; I guess he must 'a' piled it on considerable. I can't remember all he said. He reached in again to shake hands and told the boss that if he ever come over to America not to forget to look him up and come and see him. Then the boss gave him his money and told him he better go; but Clancy said he was n't in no hurry, he just come to say good-bye and settle up the little account. After a while the boss kind of understood; and then he said if Clancy did n't go he would send for a bobby and have him put on the street. Clancy said he never heard such talk and he did n't understand it; so then he leaned in farther and got interested and staid to talk it over. Clancy told me he would n't 'a' got out of there on that kind of an invitation if he had to send the wagon for the Ambassador. I guess after a while the boss made up his mind that people in America was raised that way and did n't know no better; anyways he give up to shake hands again and Clancy rubbed it in pretty polite.

Clancy told me all about it while we was going along. He ain't ever going back there again. "Them foreign countries is all right," he says, "if you are brought up in your class. But it ain't no good for boiler makers. After this I am going to stay right in the U. S."

We turned to the left and went up a different kind of a street where there was commoner stores and fish markets and oyster places and such; and I went along watching the places and counting up the numbers of the houses, but I had to skip one place;

it was the end of the canal which did n't have no number. The canal had come to the street and could n't go no farther; and so it had to stop right in line with the houses; and a ship had come to the end of the canal and could n't go no farther, either, but it had poked its nose out over the street as far as it could go and pointed with its bowsprit up at the second story of a house across the street. Horses and people could go under it, so it was n't in the way none. But there would 'a' been a number to spare for the ship if it had wanted to 'a' staid there like a house and kept it. Well, just as we got under the bowsprit Clancy come to a stop. We stopped too and waited for him to think what it was he had forgotten; but he did n't say nothing. Then he sat down on the edge of the canal and started to look at the water and think hard like he was fishing.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ON THE TRAIL OF A LADY

ND after he sat down he pulled his plug and bit off a chew. Rags sat down and waited for him to get through thinking. But I did n't sit down; I was kind of interested in the ship. So I went close where I could touch it; I could make the ship waggle its cutwater chain back and forth like the dewlap of a cow.

"The lady must n't know anything about this business," said Clancy.

"What!" I says. "Not know anything about her husband?"

"That 's it," he says. "So watch out that you don't make a mistake and let it out."

Well, I was surprised at such talk; I did n't think that of Clancy.

"Pshaw," I says. "What sense would there be in that? What was the use of Valdes coming across me, and me a hunting up you, and us a-going

to see her, if we ain't going to let her know about it."

"What 's the sense in telling her? Don't you do anything of the kind," he says. "That ain't no way to do with a woman. It 'll only start her up and excite her and keep her worrying. We tell her about it. And then—'Where 's Valdes?' 'Don't know.' That would n't be treating her square. She done her worrying a long time ago on this here same subject. And she ought to be let alone now that she is settled down to it. We 'd only set her back to where she was years ago. She 's got him dead; so let him stay dead. So don't go butting in just to start a surprise and make yourself important. This business is up to us. And we don't want to start a woman up with any hopes like that till we can produce the goods."

"What goods?" I says.

"Valdes," he says.

"Not even that he is alive and they are all rich and—"

"Naw," he says. "If he did n't turn up for a long time it 's better not to have her worrying about it. Leave her alone. She won't know any more than we tell her. And we don't know enough yet."

Well, that began to look like sense to me. Women is that way.

"She would n't know what to do about it any more than us; would she, Clancy?"

"She has n't got a picayune to rub against another. She could n't travel around and hunt him

up. And, besides, it ain't no use when she has got us. This business is up to us. So don't forget it."

"I won't say nothing," I says.

"Besides that," he says, getting up and throwing his chew into the canal, "if Valdes has given us the job of finding him we are going to take it. And we are going to do it right. That five hundred would make my old lady's eyes water. A hundred would be about the right size for me to blow in. That 's all of it that I want."

So he made it up that we was going to see if she had a room that suited us. And then he went ahead.

After a while we went to the left and passed the Lee monument and turned some more and come to a row of brick houses that had porches all covered with green lath work like chicken coops around every story. Clancy knocked.

First he did n't do it loud enough; so then he tapped like he was putting a head on a rivet. A woman come and let the door open just enough to get her nose out and see with one eye. She did n't know nothing about Mrs. Valdes and her daughter. She said she never heard of them or knew anybody that might be; and she wanted to know was Clancy a collector.

"Do I look it?" he says, and he give her a wink. After he had talked a little and she seen the kind he was she opened right up. She said two or three tenants had come and gone in a year or two; the landlord was no good and would n't fix nothing. She said she was going to move herself. And

Clancy said it was a good thing that we come when we did.

"If we had put it off then YOU would 'a' been gone," he says. "And then we could n't 'a' found out nothing."

When he spoke like that she leaned up against the side of the door and was friendly; and she told us just how it was. The blower of the grate was busted and the landlord would n't get another even when the damp rainy season was here. Clancy said that some kinds of cold is a good deal chillier than other kinds of cold and he 'd be blamed if he 'd live in the rainy season where the grate did n't have no blower. She said the only way she could get the grate to draw at all was to hold the lid of the wash-boiler against it, and that did n't work very good either; and Clancy said them kind of landlords ought to be brought to time. So when she seen the kind Clancy was, and found he was friends of the other people that had got the worst of it, she went around to the neighbors to see if they knew what he wanted to find out. She done everything for Clancy. But none of them knew.

"Why don't you go up to the grocery store?" she says. "Maybe he has kept track of them."

Clancy said that was the best idea yet; so he bid her good-bye and went. But the grocer had n't kept track; they did n't owe him nothing, so they was n't important to him. We could n't get trace of the expressman either or his number; the groceryman had n't took it. He said he would 'a'

took it only they lived pretty skimpy and did n't eat beyond their means; all he remembered was that there was a woman and her daughter that kept pretty much to themselves and rented rooms. So we went back to the house and looked up at the green lathwork a while; but that did n't do no good.

"Well, they have flew the coop," Clancy says; and he looked pretty disgusted. He turned and went; and me and Rags went along. He did n't say nothing at first. Then he would speak once in a while about the five hundred dollars; I could see he was beginning to think of that now. You see at first when it looked like we was going to do them people so much good he did n't think so much about the reward we was going to get; but now it was different. When it was good luck he threw in the five hundred like it was n't nothing; but now when it was bad luck he counted every cent of it. He was as disgusted as if he had just lost it. Anyways, that is how it was with me.

On the way back Clancy steered into a restaurant where he knew the girls that waited, and we got a good supper. And pretty soon he did n't mind it no more. He ordered more ham and eggs and asked the girl why was she looking so solemn; so then she cheered right up and sassed him back some, and she kept hanging around to hear what he would say next.

But I could n't let our five hundred dollars go so easy as that; it kept on my mind. And I told Clancy it would 'a' been a fine thing if we had found them there.

"Pass it up and eat your supper," he says. "There 's millions we have n't got. We won't miss an extra five hundred." He took some more potatoes and asked the girl if it was n't so. The girl asked if we would have some more of the hot biscuit and Clancy said yes, it would be good for what was ailing him; he had just had an attack of stomach trouble. And that made him think to ask how the little girl was getting along that scalded her foot. The other girl said it was awful bad for a while but now she was getting better. And then she went on and told what a nice girl the other girl was and praised her up and said it was too bad it happened. Clancy said you bet it was so; she was the best looking girl in the place. And he said that if his next job turned out like he expected he was going to take somebody to the theater. So then the other girl sassed him back some more and we had a real good time. Clancy seemed to know them all. He could make most anybody cheer up; I guess that is why they was glad to see him come.

On the way back to our room he did n't say much. Three or four times I asked him what he was going to do about that Valdes business but he did n't seem to be bothering about it; I thought he was n't interested in it no more. Whenever I thought I was getting him started his mind would go right off it again and talk about base-ball; he did n't seem able to take nothing serious. I was kind of disappointed in him. I did n't say no more. I have seen him sit between swims and talk base-ball.

But when we got back to the place he turned the key in the door and lit up the lamp and took off his coat and sat down and got kind of sensible. I guessed he was going to do some thinking now; but after he had tried it a while things did n't seem to suit him. He got up and took off his vest and rolled up his sleeves above his elbows and turned down his collar and then he sat down and tackled it again. That time it went better. After a while his hand reached out and took a hammer from his brussels carpet-sack kit and began tick-tacking on the heel of his shoe; then he seemed to be right at it and putting a rivet into everything he thought. He had big muscles that twinkled on his arm; I guess he did n't know he had the hammer at all. Maybe he was so used to doing all his thinking at work in his old clothes that it was n't natural for him to be serious when he was dressed up.

"Well, it 's up to you to find them," he says.

"Ain't you going to help?" I says.

"I will tend to the board and lodging. And you can find them better than anyone else."

"How am I going to do it?" I says.

"Go out and hunt for them—same as a detective," he says.

Now he seemed to be talking sensible.

"All right, Clancy; you will keep me going and I will be a detective, won't I? How would you start in if you was me?"

"Keep going around and mixing up till you run across them—same as a detective."

"That would n't never work. A detective has got a clue. I ain't got none."

"Why have n't we?" he says. "We have got a clue that they are too blame poor to travel. So they are right in this town, and going down. They are in a poor neighborhood. And you know their name; so you can go and find them."

"We ought to think up more than that. What is the rest of the clue?" I says.

"Don't bother about clues," he says. "The main thing is to go at it right. Whatever neighborhood this woman lives in the kids know her."

"You bet they do," I says.

"And kids are always out on the street," he says.

"Of course," I says.

"And in them poor neighborhoods they are always collected in bunches," he says.

"Sometimes they come for blocks," I says.

"Well, your strong hold is that you are a kid. You can find out anything. A man would have to go canvassing to get into every house; but you have got the town turned inside out for you. And one asking will clean up a district for blocks around. Just go out and mix up and you will be a good enough detective."

"I can see how that might work," I says. "But it ain't the right way to do them things. There ain't no sense in just letting things turn out by accident. A detective would n't do that."

"He would n't? How else would he do it?" he says.

"He would have a clue," I says. "Your way of doing it is just chance."

"Look a' here," he says. "How does a detective find anyone? How does any clue work? In the first place he finds out that a fellow is red-headed or walks pigeon-toed or something like that, don't he? And he finds that he is likely to mix up with boiler-makers or bridge-builders or be painting stacks or something like that. With me they could n't figure out very well. And when they have got it boiled down to that there is a good many of him and he is liable to be anywheres in the United States. So that is his clue and he goes snooping around. Then what happens?"

"Someday," I says, "he runs across him."

"Ain't that just what I am saying," he says. "Maybe he will happen to do it and maybe he won't—maybe the other fellow has got up a better clue than him. And he always finds him by accident—if it is worth telling about at all. If he knew where he was he would n't need to hunt. And when you hunt and find it is a happen-so. You pick your clue and take a chance on it. And the main-pin of the whole business always is that you have luck. How else do they EVER find them if they don't know for sure?"

He went on like that and proved that when you get right down to it everything just happens. Well, I always did say you have got to take your chances; but I did n't mean it that way.

"What you say is the truth," I says. "It would work all right; but it ain't the right way."

"What do you want but the truth?" he says. "Truth is facts. You 've got a clue. You are taking the best chance; that 's all there is to it. If their name was in the directory that would be a better clue. But it ain't."

"I would n't call that no clue at all." I says. "A good smart detective gets up a clue and it works out. That is what a clue is for. You don't know what I mean," I says.

"Don't I?" he says.

"No," I says. "And, besides, I don't know what she looks like. But we will have to do it like you say, if you can't think up any of them different ways. If it was you that was hunting you would know her when you seen her. I don't even know that."

"Yes," he says, "if I could run around without working and filling my contracts and could mix up like you and could know her when I seen her it would be an advantage. But I 've noticed that advantages are split up and divided around among people. Your way of going at it would be as good a chance as mine—maybe better."

So it was settled that to-morrow I was to start out and find her. My clue was that they was poor and that their name was Valdes. And it was a secret about the money. It was n't the way I would rather do it; but it was the best Clancy could think up. He said his way would work a good deal better than some of the detectives he knew. And it was our job, so we would do it.

"All right, Clancy," I says. "I will try it awhile your way. But it don't look right to me."

"I laid on my back"

He sat and thought a while.

"I 'll tell you how you 'd better do," he says. "Make yourself up in disguise. Fix yourself so that nobody will be suspicious when they see you where you are mixing-up. Pretend you are a kid.

Go around and act like one. Make out that you are getting acquainted and having a good time. They won't ever suspect you. Between times keep your eye out for a dark-complected lady. If you should happen to see a brunette ask her name on suspicion. But keep mixing up with the kids and you will find her out some way. And when you have got her it will get more interesting. Keep it a secret about the money."

He kept on talking foolishness like that. So I did n't say no more. While he was looking up the base-ball news I took off some of my clothes and guessed I would turn in. When I got up on the bed, which was so high it would 'a' killed a baby to fall out of, I stood up and stepped over the sunk-down place and got in on the other side of it—I never touched it. Then I laid on my back and looked up at the puckered canopy all pointing towards the middle; anything like that kind of gathers your mind all towards the middle of it and keeps you looking at the button. All of a sudden the light went out and Clancy climb in on the other side of the place.

I did n't sleep very good for a while. It did n't seem natural to be shut up in a room with the windows down and no air moving past on your face; it made it seem all dead inside. Being in a room is like shutting yourself up tight in a box, only a little bigger. But you don't notice it till you have slept outside a good deal. Someways I would rather lay down with things like they are when it gets dark and sleep natural.

Three or four times I shut my eyes and kept dropping off to sleep; but something would always scare me back again. After a while I done it though; I got to dreaming the bed was a hearse. It was all trimmed up pretty good inside and it kept going on and on and taking me somewheres—some ways it was like a steamboat—and after a while I guess it must 'a' struck a snag because it woke me up all of a sudden. I found I had been kicking around in my sleep; my hand was right in the dead man's place. You bet I took it back mighty quick. I ought n't to 'a' laid on my back because it don't agree with me; I knew it, too, but some ways I was afraid to move and turn over; it was all dead quiet and you 'd 'a' thought the center-button had me mesmerized. I have seen the Professor get people dead-set like that; but it is only a bluff. So I made up my own mind and turned my face to the wall, and then I tried to think about the five hundred.

It is funny about holes. Most times when you dig a hole and then decide you don't want it and will put the dirt all back in again, it won't go. There is more of it than you took out. But I have seen graves that worked just the other way. I have seen them that the dirt kept settling down till there did n't turn out to be as much as there was before. Then they are just sunk-down places and look awful empty. I don't like sunk-down places; there is something about them.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE GOLDEN HORSE

THE next morning I woke up and took beefsteak and onions. Clancy he took the same. The girl asked how we would like it to be and he said any way that suited her, so that she did n't make it too scarce; and when we was through he got his rope and things to go and tackle the other stack. And he told me that now I could start out and circulate.

So I done it. When I had gone a piece I got into a bunch that was playing ring-taw; and when they found out I had some marbles they give me a chance. But all that come of it was that I lost my shooter; I did n't find out anything that fit in with the clue. The next crowd I come to was only one fellow at first; but I helped him to put up a kite and that drew a lot of them that all wanted to be the one that was flying it. We most had a fight about whether another fellow's kite was going to be bigger than ours; and I took the side of the

fellow that had our kite. The other fellow was only blowing and showing off, anyway; and I told him so. That way I got pretty well acquainted, and they was all willing to talk to me and tell me things. But I could n't find out anything about it from them. After that I kept a-going; and when noon come I bought some ginger cakes and went off by myself and sat on the curbstone and let George take his swim while I was eating. And when dinner was over I struck out in a different direction.

I guess I could 'a' had lots of fun if I had let myself; but you see I had to not get interested because I was tending to business. I liked it first-rate. But that night when I got home from work I had n't found anyone that knew where she lived. But Clancy did n't mind it; he said that was n't nothing and it was only because I had n't come across the right ones yet.

Four or five days it was the same. I come across a fellow which had a kite that he was willing to sell for eight cents, and it was a good flier; so I guessed I had better buy it. After that I did n't need to look for a gang; I would just put up a kite wherever I come to. And when I had let the different ones hold it I would know all about that neighborhood and take it in. I done good that way and Clancy said I was getting to be a great detective. He said he meant it, too. But the kite got its tail around a telegraph wire and staid up; so I had to take my chances again.

Sometimes I got pretty sick of going around and

doing that, and I told Clancy I did n't like his way at all; it was n't sensible and there was n't any fun in it either. It seemed like I was just going around playing. He said he seen what was the matter with me. He said I must remember that I was only PRETENDING I was playing; I was working like a detective and what I was doing was important. The next day it went better again; I kept doing it and asking where she lived in the different places.

Clancy did n't seem to mind it when I did n't have any luck; and then I found out why it was. When I had been at it about a week he told me he was intending to look them up himself when he got time. But just now he had to stick at what he was doing. You see he come down there to work at making iron tanks in a boiler place, but the place did n't pan out to suit him. So then he struck out and got a job of his own painting a stack. When he was doing it he took a contract for some more. Then he seen he had got into business for himself at last; there was steamboat stacks on lots of factories in the South and he guessed he would travel around and paint them. The way he got into it he could n't help it. You see one time when he was looking for a riveting job and they did n't need a man he took a job for a fill-in a-painting front ends on locomotives. The front ends of locomotives which take the wind in all kinds of weather gets the paint wore off and need to be took care of and painted; so that way he learned to paint cast-iron. So this last time he got out of a job he looked up

and seen a smoke-stack; and there was him that was used to working up high on waterworks towers and bridges and that knew how to paint iron, and that made him a big smoke-stack painter. He did n't like to get so far away from his real trade; but it seemed to keep branching out in all directions.

"How could I help it," he says, "when a job stands up and looks you in the face?" There was him and there was the stacks.

Well, as I was a-saying, there got to be more that needed painting and it paid pretty good and he was going to travel round. He would 'a' done it if it was n't that I come along with this Valdes business to be tended to. Now he would stay there in New Orleans, and find some other work when them stacks was done. He would 'a' quit now but the contracts he had took would last him a week longer, and he had to keep on and fill them. He could n't quit his own work that way; it was n't as if he was working for a boss.

"You keep at it a week longer," he says to me. "Then I will get some time to go at it myself and help you out. I will get some kind of work that will pay our board here. And I will take time to think this other business over and get around."

He said he would maybe take a job at ordinary painting, now that he was started at that kind of work. He said he did n't like to tackle anything but iron; he was used to always working on iron and it was more in his line. But with him things kept a-branching out; and he said he bet he could

paint wood or brick just as good as iron if he went at it. That would maybe keep him there and give him time. So I kept a-going. I seen so much and done so much which did n't amount to nothing that it would make me tired to read it. But after a while I come to the part that I am a-going to tell about.

One morning when I come out of the door I guessed I would make up my mind where I would go this time; so while I was thinking it over I got to going down stream and I went along with the mule teams and everything towards the river. While I was still thinking it over I come to where Canal Street empties into the Mississippi and the river was flowing down stream; so then I turned to the left and kept going along. And by that time I seen I was going down through the old part of town that day.

You see that city has two halves to it; and the old part and the new part don't get mixed up on accounts of Canal Street being between. That street is like a river, with Frenchtown on one side and the new part on the other; but them two don't run opposition like river towns because the new part has most of the git-ap and the other would rather stay like it used to be and feel satisfied. Anybody would think that the two halves would get mixed up and both alike by people moving from one side of Canal Street to the other; but that ain't so, because they don't do it. The old-time houses in the Creole part keeps their people to themselves.

Well, as I was a-saying, I turned down stream; it was a bright day and I kept going along and not bothering about it no more than if I was a raft. That day it kind of come natural to drift along with the current, 'specially in that sleepy old part of town. There was a careless old road that run along by the river, and there was n't much business along there. On one side of the road was the line of brigs and barks tied up and lying there still and quiet and waiting their turn as far as you could see; and along the other side of the street was all kinds of houses looking as old as worn-out ships. I guess that nothing looks as old as a worn-out ship that ain't ever going to sea no more. I mean one that is just backed up into still water and left there by everybody, but keeps looking like it could go out and do as good as the rest of them again if they would give it a fair show. I seen one once that I would like to have; it was pretty strong and able looking only it was coming to pieces in spots where it had got it the worst. And now it was n't no good except some old sailor wanted to come and sleep on it. Well, them houses was that kind, only they had the people and the old furniture in them yet; you 'd 'a' thought they had come there from a hundred years ago and was moored all in line along the street together. They made the whole place seem like the foreign past where everything was remembering; I can't tell just how it was but anyhow it was that way.

I loafed along with my hands in my pockets and kept leaving the noise of drays and drivers

and roustabouts farther and farther behind; it kept getting quieter and quieter and after a while I could n't hear nothing but myself a-whistling. I kept on passing old run-down houses; sometimes a tired-out looking frame building that was as staggery as its shed and so old they was both dark to match; sometimes a little tobacco store standing up on the bare posts of its foundation like a ship when she is in the stays, and with rickety stairs letting themselves down to the sidewalk in case a sailor should come along some time and want some tobacco; and sometimes a plaster-fronted house with its face all scarred. You could see where things had happened to them houses years and years ago; they made you think about things.

Clancy told me it used to be good times down that way. But that was before the war. You could see for yourself that it might 'a' been pretty fair when people had money to spend and the furniture was new and everybody had niggers and could go visiting in style. But the best times was so far back that all them people that lived there first was dead and had left their old furniture and things to the ones that come next. Every person that lived there, when you stopped to think about it, had moved out to them little houses I seen in the cemetery. But the ones that was here now was n't rich; they was just living there like it was a cast-off neighborhood. I did n't meet many along that road. But a fellow would know all the time that there was people and furniture inside, and that the houses was keeping them to themselves.

Some of them poor neighborhoods is that way—but not all of them; these houses looked as if they was keeping it all a secret about being poor. When people lose their money a place gets poor and then it goes ahead itself and makes things worse; you could see how it done it. Well, it was n't none of my business; I did n't live there, so it was n't nothing to me. But I could n't help feeling bad for all them old houses and things that had struck bad luck.

If I had kept on thinking like that I guess I would 'a' got to remembering graveyards again; so I thought up another tune and kept on a-going. There kept on being ships all along; there was more vacant places between them now than when I started, but there was n't any end to them as far as I could see. After a while, when I was getting out to the suburbs of the ships, I come to a little cobblestoned square that was just an open place for market-day. It was a market-place yet but there was n't ever any market there no more; everything was old and empty and nobody there. There was an old iron bell on a pole with an old rotten rope hanging from its rusty crank. The bell pole was old and dark-looking like everything else; the time and weather had chewed the rope till it was too short; the end of it was all frazzly. The old bell looked like it could n't ring any more. But I guess it used to do all right away back when it had to call all them people to come and do their morning marketing. But it was all quiet now; there was n't nothing doing except when a little wind would come and move the rope on the bell.

"Everything was old and empty"

I had more than twenty-five cents in my pocket and I was so hungry from walking that they would 'a' got some trade from me, I guess, if they had kept the market going till now. I would 'a' bought a piece of pie or any kind of cooked stuff, according to what they had. Maybe I would 'a' took cookies. I bet they had all kinds of good stuff away back when them fine Southern ladies and big black nigger mammies was filling their baskets there. Maybe it was a place where they put up likely niggers to sell, too, same as a place I seen down town. And you could look them over and pick out a good one that could play the mouth-organ and do things.

But there was n't anything there now; if Rags had 'a' been along he could n't 'a' found a piece of something to smell. The Gulf breezes and the rains had had the place to themselves so long that they had washed and blowed every little thing away; they had cleaned the cobblestones as bare as a hearth and swept out the cracks between; there was n't a wisp of straw or a cabbage leaf or a yesterday's circus bill or anything. There was n't anything doing or any signs that there had been anything doing; just the remainders of what was built there to stay. Trade had moved away from there and been gone so long that the place was n't even for rent. Only the place was left and that was n't even good for something else. The bell looked like somebody ought to ring it; so I jumped up and got the end of the rope to find out how it sounded. It was pretty stiff and clanky; when I

first pulled the rope it squeaked louder than it rang. The crank hollered so loud you 'd 'a' thought I surprised it; I guess nobody had n't done that to it for a long time. But I made it ring all right; so then I kept on a-going.

At first I turned away from the river and then I went along in the same direction again. After a while, when I was passing the end of an alley—or maybe it was a little between-street—I heard something that sounded like kids, but when I stopped and listened it was only a little girl. The noise of her come from the big doors of a little stable down the alley and from what she was saying I could tell she was bossing a horse around and telling him to do things. Between times she would laugh and sing and have a lot of fun to herself; so I guessed I would go passing down that way. I would go moseying along as if I was only on my way to the next street and I would see what she was doing that was so much fun.

When I got down to the doors, which was open, I went slower and took a look. It was n't a real horse at all; it was going to be a big wooden image of a horse. The little girl was sitting straddle on his back and he was standing in the chips of himself like a horse that had just been bedded down with shavings. The shavings and pieces of him was scattered all over the floor and some out into the alley; but he was n't all come out of the chunk yet. Some of him was all done—his head and one foreleg was perfect—and some of him was only chopped out but commencing to look natural. The

rest of him was just big square blocks of wood all fastened together; you could see where the joints come because the dry glue was all squeezed out between the places. You see he was so big they had built him together out of different-shaped blocks before they started to whittle him down; but even if he was n't all out you could see by what was done that he was going to be a good lively horse. From the way he arched his neck and threw out his fore leg you 'd most think he was stamping and pawing to hurry up and get out of it. But what I could n't make out was the chunks that was all glued together and piled up on his back; it was just a load of wood on him and too heavy for a horse; it did n't look right on him. The little girl was sitting on behind with her arms around it.

"That is a fine big hobby horse you have got," I says.

When she seen me come snooping around she stopped all of a sudden and quit saying git-ap; she sat looking sideways at me. She had big brown eyes. She did n't say nothing.

"Is he going to be a sign horse?" I says.

She just shook her head and said "No."

"What kind of a horse is he going to be?" I says.

"He is going to be a church horse. He is n't going to be a sign horse at all," she says. I seen she did n't like to have him called that. She was kind of bashful some ways, but she looked right at me with her eyes wide open like she was think-

ing me over and would maybe get acquainted. I guess she thought I ought to go on and mind my own business. But I guessed I would hang around a while, anyhow; I wished the man would come back and carve some on him. The little girl was mighty good-looking for anyone that is dark complexioned; but you could see she was n't tanned that way; it all come natural, like her eyes, which was big and brown.

"Well, I did n't know," I says. "I thought maybe he was going to be a harness-shop horse. Then he would have to be dappled."

"He is n't a shop horse at all," she says. "Don't you see he has got St. Martin on his back?" she says. And she pointed to the chunks of wood that was all glued up in front of her. It did n't look like nothing to me.

"Is n't he going to have a nice cloak?" she says. And she stroked her hand on a bunch of stuck-together and sawed-off scantlings that did n't look like nothing at all. I told her it was pretty good; but all the same I could n't see it. But after she said that, I could see maybe the other part was going to be a man; I could tell it by his block head and the square arm that was sticking out like a handle.

"He is n't going to be a dappled horse at all," she says. "He is going to be all covered with gold."

"What for?" I says.

"So that people can look up at him," she says. "He is going away up on a church where everybody can see him."

"Oh, then he is a monument horse," I says.

"It is St. Martin," she says. And she pointed to the chunk again that she had been holding onto with her arms around the waist of it.

"What are they going to make a statue of him for?" I says. "What did he do?"

When I said that she sat and looked at me with her eyes opened wide like she was pretty surprised.

"Why, don't you know about St. Martin?" she says.

"I never heard about it," I says.

"Don't you know about him and the poor man?" she says.

"What poor man?" I says. "I just come from up North. I have n't been around here long."

Right away she turned sideways on the horse and seemed to get interested in me. Then she sat with her hands in her lap and told me all about it.

"Once upon a time," she says, "St. Martin was riding down the road on his big fine horse. While he was riding along with his nice velvet cloak waving out behind—just like this—he met a poor man walking. The poor man could hardly keep himself warm in his old raggedy clothes; he was shivering and chattering his teeth in the cold chilly weather. And the cold was coming into the holes of his clothes. He was as cold as he could be. St. Martin saw him and made his horse stop. And when he looked at the poor man it made him feel bad to have such a nice cloak and be so warm himself. So he took his cloak and cut it in two with his sword and divided up with the poor man. And

"'Once upon a time'"

was n't that nice for him to do? Don't you see," she says, "how he is going to be holding the end of his cloak around in front of him and cutting off a piece with his sword?"

"What sword?" I says.

"Why, the one he is going to have! He has n't got it yet. But when he is all done they are going to make him one."

"What is the rest of it?" I says.

"Why, that is what St. Martin *did*," she says.

It was a kind of a fairy story. When she had told it to me she put her hands in her lap pretty satisfied and looked as if I would think it was awful wonderful. I did n't let on but what it was something great.

"And then the other fellow was warm," I says.

"Yes," she says, and she opened her eyes up wide at me.

I just thinks to myself, "I bet the fellow was hungry, too." But I did n't tell her about it. If it had 'a' been me I would rather have had the story to be that he come along with a big loaf of bread and that he had his sword along to cut off some nice thick slices. That would 'a' suited me all right. But I guess I must 'a' looked as if I thought it was pretty good, anyhow; she acted pretty satisfied.

CHAPTER XXXV

LITTLE LOUISE

FTER that I went right into the place and looked the horse all over. One of his hind legs was only lumber yet. His tail was pretty chunky too and was n't all whittled away from his leg yet, but it was beginning to switch some. Then I looked around the whole place, which had lots of drawings and pieces of carving hung up and laying around. I found it was n't a stable at all; and she told me it belonged to old Pierre, who was an altar builder. All over one side was drawings of peaks and arches and three-leaved vines and fancy things; and there was some pieces of carving that had been made after them with flames and flowers and all kinds of wooden flourishes. At that side there was a long bench with a wooden vise and lots of clamps and a glue pot and a rack of carving tools. There was one piece that had just been sawed out and was being carved till the picture of it looked just like it. But it was n't him that was making the horse;

somebody else was making it for him. She said he could make flowers but he could n't make live things. He was awful good at them other things which was his trade and he was so old he knew all the copies by heart; but he could n't do a horse which he did n't have no copy for. I asked her could n't he get somebody's horse to be a copy. But she said how could he lay a horse down on a board and mark him out and besides a horse had too many different sides to him. Anyways, she said somebody's horse would n't do because this had to be better than a real horse. She said Jean was making him up. Well, I got into an argument about it, and she did n't make out what she claimed. But she stuck to it she was right anyways. Maybe she was too; only you could n't prove it.

Just when I had got done looking around and talking and was back in the door where I ought to 'a' been there come in a young man from the back. I guess he was about twenty-five years old and was Jean; he was dark complected, too, and had a little black moustache—it was n't very big yet. And then I found out what her name was. It was Louise. He called her that and asked if she had n't better get off the horse and run away home because the folks might want her. But she was n't very anxious to go and leave the horse, so he reached up and took her down. But she stayed awhile to see him carve and I hung around, too.

He did n't mind me watching; I guess he was used to it. First he took a little crooked chisel

and he rubbed it light and quick on an oil-stone and went to work on the head. There was n't much to do on it, as far as I could see, but he kept finding a little here and there—mostly on the nostrils, which he got so that they was most breathing. Between times when he was looking at it he would keep passing his fingers along its nose and over its nostrils till he seen and felt how it could be better; you 'd think he was coaxing the horse right into shape.

Louise and me got so interested watching him that she forgot she ought to go home; so when he thought of it he told her again. When she went I went too. She was going back up the alley the way I come, anyhow; so I walked along beside her.

"Is he your brother?" I says.

"I have n't got any brother," she says. "Have you got any?"

"I have got six," I says. "We were all boys."

"Then you have n't got any sisters. Neither have I. I have n't anybody. Have you got any other folks?"

"Yes; I have got plenty," I says. "Where are you going to?"

"I am going home now," she says.

"You just told me you did n't have any folks," I says.

"I mean real folks," she says. "How many folks have you got?"

"I never counted them up," I says. "They run off into cousins and aunts. You would *have* to have some folks," I says.

"No, I have n't," she says. "But they are most like real folks. They took me in."

Well, we got to arguing considerable about it. It did n't get done till we was out of the alley and half-way to the river. Then I seen how it was. Her mother, which was all she had left, took sick and died about three years ago. From what I could make out her father was no good and something become of him. And we kept on a-going towards the river.

"Then them other people are your folks now?" I says.

"Yes; they let me live with them," she says. "But the Sisters would 'a' took me in, too. They are awful good and wanted me. But I would n't want to go off to a place and be a deaf and dummy or something, would you?"

"You bet I would n't," I says. "I would go and be a sailor first."

"I would n't want to be all alike and walk in a row, would you?" she says.

"Not unless I was a regular soldier, I would n't. Then I would," I says. "And so you told them you would n't."

"Oh, I only cried," she says. "I did n't know anything to say. So then Manuelo come and said I need n't cry and took me home. So I went and belonged with her."

"Manuelo!" I says. "Do you mean Manuelo—" But right there I made myself shut up.

"Why, do you know her?" she says. And she looked at me surprised. I seen I most give myself away.

"No," I says, "I don't know her," I says.

"We pretend she is my big sister," she says.

"Has Manuelo got a ma?" I says.

"Of course she has got one," she says.

"What is *her* name?" I says.

"Do you mean what do I call her? I just call her Mis' Effie. She says I could call her ma. But I don't. She ain't."

"What is both of their names together?" I says.

"Valdes," she says.

It was them.

Right away I seen I would never 'a' thought to ask her. Here I had been detecting two weeks and right when I was taking a rest from it she up and tells me about it. And if it was n't for that I would 'a' gone away and missed them; I never thought she had anything to do with it. I was mighty glad; but it kind a' surprised me and I would rather I had found them when I was looking. But I guess it did n't make no real difference; I had come across them. I seen I would have to tend to business. I was so interested in her and the horse I would never 'a' thought they had anything to do with it.

"Let us go and get some ginger cookies and eat them. I have got lots of money," I says.

When I said that she took me away up the street and showed me the bakery place. It was an old place with little panes of glass that had "acco" on one window and "ars" on the other; I guess the fellows around there had a bad pitcher. And when the panes was put in again business was so

bad it did n't pay to have the rest of the words put in. But it did n't make no difference anyways; anybody would know what it meant. She liked ginger animals the best; and they had all

"The edge of the river"

kinds. She took a horse which was two for five cents. And I took the other one.

"Let us go and let our feet hang over and look at the river," I says.

"Let us save them up till we get there," she says. "I am going to start on his tail first." So

we done it. And while we was going I thinks to myself I will have to ask her things.

It was a nice place to sit at the edge of the river; the weather was pretty bright and clear for early in winter; so we let our feet hang over the river and watched the sun busting out and shining down on it. There was n't much doing around there except a whistle which you could tell it was an ocean steamer because it sounded so big and deep. And then she come and passed us away out in the middle with just a little smoke coming from her three red stacks in a row behind each other. I have seen the Speed do more with either one of her stacks than that three all joining their smoke together. It was the big French liner starting out for Havre. There was a couple of catboats too, but you would hardly notice them where it was so wide; and then there come a tug with a brig which it was taking down to give it a shove out into the Gulf. I liked to watch it.

"What did your mother die of?" I says.

"She did n't die of *anything*. She just *took sick* and died," she says.

"Is she out in that cemetery, too?" I says.

"Yes; they took her out there. She is in one of the brick places where it is all alike in a row."

"I seen that place; it makes the fence. I was out there," I says.

"I was out there once," she says.

I seen she was n't in any hurry; when I was all through with my horse she had n't no more than started on hers. She only took little bites off dif-

ferent places and kept saving it up and choosing what she would eat next so it would last long. I did n't do that; I ate it up. I got to watching her and come to a stop for a while.

"Who is Jean?" I says.

"Why, you saw him," she says. "You saw him making the horse."

"And he is n't your brother at all?"

"Oh, no! He is Manuelo's beau."

"Oh!" I says. "Does he get lots of altars to make?"

"Oh, he does n't make them! It is old Pierre's place and he can make them all himself. Jean is only making the horse. He does it mostly nights; and sometimes he gets a chance daytimes. Jean works. Old Pierre can carve flowers and things, but that is all. He never took in a horse before. So when he got it he sent for Jean."

"Oh!" I says.

"One time Jean made two angels for money. But he did n't like the first one good enough to put gold on; so Manuelo kept it and we have it. I think it is a good angel. It is saying its prayers. The two he did good are in a lodge; there is one kneeling on each side up in front. They come out better than anybody ever thought he could do. But he does n't own a place and do carving; he works. He carves anyways. Some day he is going to try and get a chance to make horses and men like General Jackson."

"I seen that," I says. "That is what they call a sculpture."

"Yes," she says. "His brother was one; but he died. He was older than Jean and went across the ocean. Jean says he could do just as good if he had a chance to practise. This horse is going away up on top of a church down in South America. When it is done it is going to be all covered with gold and he is going to get five hundred dollars for it. Then maybe him and Manuelo will get married. Don't you think he ought to make it a good horse?"

"That is good pay," I says.

"Yes," she says. "Everybody thinks it is just as good a horse as General Jackson's. Only ours is wood."

"What does he do regular?" I says.

"He paints."

"What on? Wood or iron?" I says.

"He does n't paint that way. He paints pictures. And he is a sword-etcher. He works where they make things for Mardi Gras, and lodges and soldiers and everybody that marches. He paints pictures on satin banners and puts names on fancy swords and does everything like that. But he does n't like it. He says that kind of painting work is n't good. So at home he does what he wants and is always practising. He makes drawings of people that are ready to go in swimming."

"Oh!" I says. "I thought he was the other kind of a painter."

But I did n't tell her I knew one. After she got started I did n't have to ask her much. She kept on and told me; that way I found out more and more.

But it did n't amount to nothing. Mrs. Valdes just kept boarders when she could get some. Her and Manuelo did the work and Louise helped to

The tailor

wipe the dishes. But it was hard to get anybody to come along out there; it was n't a good place. Their main boarder was an old tailor; he did n't have to work no more and he had his big heavy machines stored in the attic. They was n't any

use no more, but he was the kind that would n't part with anything unless he got a good price. He owned the house they lived in. And he owned the furniture too. Before they come there they had a place which was in a nicer place but did n't pay. So after a while things got worse and they lost their furniture. That is how they come to make a bargain with the tailor which was looking for somebody. He got his board free and was took care of and everything for the rent. Well, they thought it was a good thing for them at first; but it was n't. You see they had to get enough boarders to keep him good and take what was left over for themselves; but it was hard to get the boarders.

The tailor, which was big and heavy and strong and used mostly to sitting down, just staid around the house and let the time pass. Between meal-times he would sit mostly outside on the second-story porch in his big chair and look down at the old market-place; you 'd 'a' thought he would get tired doing that all the time, but he did n't. He was pretty pop-eyed and stupid looking and had a fat nose that you would think was a kind of blue; anyways, that is what Louise said. She said I ought to 'a' seen the end of his nose. He did n't ever say much except when he wanted something; he just come to the table regular and looked hard at the victuals and ate his meals. That was all he cared to do. He did n't have to make clothes no more or think about anything.

They had to do all the worrying. Some ways it was the same for them as if they was working out.

But it did n't seem so much like working out because Manuelo and her ma had a whole house and was together. And Jean, which was Manuelo's beau, did n't know but what they was doing pretty good.

Sometimes things run pretty close to the edge. Sometimes they did n't have much left for themselves after they had fed the tailor and the others; but they had to keep up with the bargain. Yesterday they thought they was going to have some roast beef. Then the tailor called for a second plate; but that left some anyway for them. And just then the young lady that comes in sometimes for dinner—but they could n't tell when—opened the door and sat down at the table. And so they did n't have any of the beef. They had to guess pretty close about them things; and if they did n't guess right they would eat less of something and make it come even.

Mis' Effie used to think that if they kept trying they could get ahead and make a raise that would land them in a place of their own again where they could do better. But they did n't get ahead and Manuelo kept growing bigger and bigger till now she was a young lady; and now her mother had 'most give up that idea. All she cared for now was to keep a-going and have a parlor and a place to raise Manuelo right till something become of her.

Louise told me all about everything; but it did n't amount to much. I guess I could 'a' found out more. But I did n't know what it was; so I did n't know what questions to ask. So I just took what come. And after a while Louise had

kept nibbling round the shape of her horse till he was near gone; and then she swallowed the middle. Then we sat and just looked at the river. She did n't say no more for awhile and neither did I. She had come to a stop and was thinking about something. But after a while she went back to where we commenced in the first place and started to talk again.

"Did you go all through the cemetery when you was out there?" she says.

"I did n't get off into it. I just seen it," I says.

"Did you see the place that is all along like a brick wall—with the little doors?"

"Yes," I says. "Them are the ones that make the fence."

"That is where she is," she says. "She is one of them."

"There is a lots of them," I says.

"Did you see them taking anybody out of them when you was there?" she says.

"No; I did n't notice any. I just went past swift," I says.

"Do you think they will take her out, too?" she says. "It is most three years now. Sometimes I am afraid they will take her out. Then she won't be anywhere at all. Do you think they would?"

"I don't know," I says. "I guess they would if her time was up."

"That is what I think, too," she says. "But don't you think maybe they would leave *her* there?"

"I don't know," I says. "Maybe they would if you seen them about it. Sometime I am going out there and look at it."

"I wish I could go, too," she says. "I was out there once."

"Why don't you go?" I says. "And why don't you ask? That is the way to find out things."

"Mis' Effie don't ever take me out there. And Manuelo says for me not to think about them things. So I don't say anything any more. She says they won't ever take her out. But they *do* take them out. I know about it."

I seen what she was thinking about. She was afraid they would take her out and shove her down with the other bones and get her mixed up.

"Maybe they will just leave her be," I says.

"Mis' Effie told me it don't make any difference, anyways. Because the rest of her is in heaven. But I would always want to know where she *is*. They say I must n't think about it. So I don't let them know. But they *do* take them out. I know about it."

"If it was me I would just find out. I would go out and ask the boss."

"Did you pay your fare out?" she says.

"Of course," I says. "That ain't nothing. I have got more money than that now."

"I wish I could go out when you do," she says.

"If I knew you I would let you go along. I would n't care."

"You could take me on the steam cars; could n't you?" she says.

"Of course," I says. "And pay your fare, too."

"I wish I knew you," she said.

But I guess she did n't think she would ever know me because I lived up North and was a steamboater. She asked a lot of questions about me and I told her some. And then she remembered all of a sudden that she ought to go home.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE MARCH OF TIME

I WAS going back the same way, so we went along together. She went right down the river road till we was most to the bell on its pole; then she turned away from the river and we kept on across the old market-place. And pretty soon she pointed ahead to where she lived. It was in one of the three-storied houses—mostly solid-looking old brick houses that had windows which come right down to the floors and opened like doors on hinges so that you could step out on the lath-work verandas which is called galleries. You could sit up in the gallery and watch if anybody went past. Her house was most up to the edge of the sidewalk, with one stone step up to the door.

While she was a-pointing a woman come out of the door; she had a two-handled basket on her arm. When Louise seen that she waved her hand and called out, "Oh, Mis' Effie!" and said she was going to market, too; then she hurried up and

did n't pay no more attention to me; I guess she thought I would follow her. But I did n't; I guessed I had better keep to myself. So I went slow.

Louise took the basket herself and went along. They turned and come around the lower end of the little square towards the river, and when they got to the river road they turned again towards town. I was going to take that way back, too, so I waited till they had got a piece ahead and then I started up. I went pretty near as slow as I could, but I kept getting nearer. Once I pretty near come up to Louise. Then I went awful slow to give them a chance. Louise was walking behind with the basket. After a while she noticed that I was coming but was n't catching up; so then she motioned to me and called. Mis' Effie looked back to see who she was calling; and when she seen it was me she did n't bother about it. So then I caught up as far as Louise and stayed. She gave me one of the handles of the basket which had a lid, too, and I helped her carry it. It was n't heavy at all; I could 'a' muscled it out on one finger, but she liked us to carry it together. I told her I could do it myself, but she would n't have it that way; so we went on and kept talking—mostly about the basket.

After a little while we come up with a big drove of bronze turkeys and a man with a stick which was all going to market, too. So we kept going along with them. Right away they reminded me of something to eat again and I wished Christmas

was here; but it was four or five weeks off yet. I get hungry awful easy. Louise said she would rather have it New Year's, because that was when you get presents. I pointed out that she was wrong and we got to arguing about it. She stuck to it that, anyway, you get your presents on New Year's; Christmas was only a holy day. I did n't like to fight about it when Mis' Effie was there, so I give it up; I did n't say no more. And after that we got to picking out the ones we liked best. I took first choice and got the best one in the drove; he marched along in front like a soldier and had a fine big tossel sprouting right out of the middle of his chest and hanging down in front; it looked like he had got a badge for being so big. But it was n't really that; it was because he was a gobbler. Louise got one pretty near as good. Anyway, she was satisfied.

"Mine looks like he had gold on him!" she says.

"He is kind of polished up in places," I says.

"Is n't he a pretty brown?" she says.

"You bet!" I says. "Their feathers are fine. But I would rather have mine brown clean through —with gravy." But she said she would rather keep hers to look at. So we kept going along with them and talking about Christmas and how the turkeys was all going to be killed and everything like that. Mis' Effie looked at them, too; I bet she wished she had one. And a couple of times she looked around at us but did n't pay much attention to me; I guess she thought I was a partner of Louise and was only helping to carry the basket.

While we was going along I kept looking at her mighty hard behind her back; I could n't hardly believe that this was her that I heard the story about. You see I had got it into my head that she was a young lady, because I only knew her in the story Valdes told. And I had forgot to have her get older. When you don't see a fellow for a long time you keep on thinking he is the same; and when you come back in a year or two and find he has grown a lot and has on long pants he don't fit your mind at first and he don't suit you. You don't think about them things between times. But after a while you get used to him. It is funny that people don't get older in your mind. You have got to see them all the time or else come back once in a while and set your mind like a watch; I guess if you depended on other people you would n't ever grow up. That is the way it was with her; I did n't know anything about her except what she was years ago and I had been keeping her young all the time. But after she had turned her eyes back at us a couple of times she began to look like the woman that had done all them things and then she come more natural. I could kind of see that it might 'a' been her that was a young lady and got married and went to live in a vineyard. Who would think that anyone that maybe started out little like Louise would turn out to be keeping boarders like that. A fellow would n't think of it till something like this popped up. It would be the same with Louise—when you come to think of it.

After we went quite a distance the turkeys turned

a corner in front of us and took a different way. We had to come to a stop while they was passing; and then we kept on till we got to the market. Mis' Effie went all through the different stalls and looked the whole market over for the best bargains there was a-going that day. There was meat and vegetable and chicken departments—lots of every kind. And besides the ones that had stalls to put their stuff on there was others sitting in between with their stuff beside them, mostly black mammies with gumbo to sell and Choctaw Indians with medicine roots and fancy work; and there was a separate part to buy old clothes or anything. You can talk a little of everything in that place—French and Spanish and Negro and Indian and Jew; and each of them sells the kind of stuff that belongs with them. And Mis' Effie was so used to it she could make them understand when things was too high in most any language.

I was n't going to follow her all over that way, but Louise made me; she said I must come and help because now the basket was going to get heavier. After a while Mis' Effie decided to take a little roast of pork that suited her. Then she looked around mighty particular and got the two-cent bunch of soup greens that was a little better than all the rest; and after that she hunted up a good soup-bone to go with it. And that was all; it was n't heavy at all. When she had got the bone put in she closed the lid of the basket and latched it shut and took it up and carried it herself.

While we was going around we come to the old-

clothes place; and all of a sudden Louise pointed to one of the counters and said, "Oh, Mis' Effie, there is Manuelo's lace; it isn't sold yet." Mis' Effie went and looked at it. Then she set down her basket and looked at it closer. And while she was holding it up and making it into different shapes the old-clothes woman come over and asked if she had decided to buy it; but she said "No," she was only looking at it again. It was marked ninety cents. I guess she could n't 'a' bought it, anyways, because she only had seventeen cents left; I seen it in her hand. I had more than that myself. She looked at it pretty close again and then hung it up and took up her basket; and then she turned to Louise and told her she had better go on home now because she had come far enough. Louise said she was n't tired but Mis' Effie explained to her that it was because she had got herself all mussed up playing and must n't follow her any farther. She would n't look nice to folks following her up Canal Street.

"People would think I was very careless if my little girl did n't have her hair combed or her good shoes on." So she patted her on the head and fixed some hair behind her ear and told her to go back home. Then she said good-bye and kept on; and Louise and me turned back and come out of the other end of the market.

"Where is she going now?" I says.

"She is just going up the street. She will walk up and down."

"What for?" I says.

"Mis' Effie went and looked at it"

"Maybe to get a boarder. She will walk up and down mostly by the depot. And maybe somebody that has just got off the train will ask her about the streets or something. Maybe she will get to talking to them and maybe it will turn out that they are looking for a place. And then she will just speak about how we have a place and maybe they would make up their minds to come. But Mis' Effie would n't go up to anybody and speak to them first, because that would n't be nice. But if she got to talking to anybody she could say how we have a place."

"She is taking her chances," I says.

"One time we did get a boarder that way. Mis' Effie was just coming past the depot and not thinking of anything and somebody asked her something and they turned out to be a boarder. That is how she found it out. Maybe sometime somebody will ask her something again."

"What she ought to do is put an advertisement in the paper," I says.

"She did do that once. She put it in two days. But none of the people turned out to be boarders and it kept on costing money; so we could n't afford to keep it up that way. Manuelo wrote the piece herself and it read nice about our house in print."

She remembered just how it went. She had read it so many times that she knew it all by heart and could say it right off about how it was a quiet and retired neighborhood with home surroundings. I guess she meant it was pretty dead out there and nothing doing.

"Maybe she will meet one now," she says. "The winter races are going now and there are people coming. Some of them race men has lots of money and pay good if you could get one of them." So then I seen how it was.

"How did Manuelo's lace get in that place?" I says.

"It is n't hers yet," she says. "But if Mis' Effie gets a boarder maybe she will buy it. That is a better piece of lace than the other people could 'a' bought unless they was rich. It is a piece of REAL lace; Mis' Effie knows them real things. And it would be good for Manuelo's new hat. Manuelo looks good in them kind of things."

Well, that was n't nothing to me; so I did n't say no more.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE WAY OF A WOMAN

WE kept walking along on the edge of Canal Street. She seemed to be going along with me; and I was n't going nowheres. I could n't think of no more to ask; I did n't know anything to find out. So then she started asking me things.

"When are you going to the cemeterie?" she says.

"Some time when I feel like it," I says. "I can go whenever I want to."

"Then why don't you go now?" she says.

"What for?" I says.

"Because," she says.

She did n't say no more but kept going along with me up the street—we went along kind of slow together and just mixed up with things—and after a while when I was thinking I would stop and give George a recess she come to a flower store where it was all full of colored flowers. So then she made me come and look through the glass at them

instead. I had to stand pretty long and let her tell how nice all the different ones was.

"Oh, would n't it be nice if we had some of them to take along," she says.

"Take along where?" I says.

"Out to the cemeterie," she says.

So then I seen what she was tagging around after me for.

"Yes, they are pretty good," I says.

"But they cost lots of money," she says.

"But you can look at them for nothing," I says. "And smell them, too."

"Only you can't have them," she says. "You can't pick them when they are in a store that way."

"But you don't need to have them. They ain't like ginger-bread that you have got to own first," I says. "They are only to look at and smell; and ain't you doing that now?"

"But you can't have them," she says.

"Well, what is the USE of having them?" I says. "Looking and smelling don't use them up none; and so the man don't care. And ain't that all he sells them for? Pshaw!" I says, "flowers have n't got no more sense than to give themselves away all the time, have they? Who cares who owns flowers! So let the man keep them."

"But flowers AIN'T to own," she says.

"Ain't that just what I said?" I says.

"But I did n't mean it THAT way," she says. "Flowers ain't to own at all. Flowers are to give away. And how can you give them away if they ain't yours first?"

"Oh!" I says. I did n't say no more at first. Half the time you could n't answer her back. But I could n't buy her them kind of flowers with twenty cents. So I up and told her they cost too much and I could n't give them to her.

"Oh, I did n't mean that at all!" she says.

"Ain't that what you just said?" I says.

"I only said they would be nice to take along. I meant I did n't want to keep them," she says.

"Oh!" I says.

Well, while we was starting to argue about it the flower man was standing in the door; and I took notice that he was listening and starting to smile. Then he came out and put his finger under her chin and looked at her some more. Then what does he do but go into the store and come out again and give her a second-hand bouquet. It was a pretty good one, too. It had paper lace all around the edge and was fitted in a shiney white-paper funnel with a tin-foil handle; it was one of them high-toned bouquets. The flowers was only a little wilted; I guess it made them tired to be all fixed discomfortable with a white collar on. She took it mighty quick and said "Thank you," and then she give it to me to smell it and say how nice it was. I took a smell and handed it right back to her. But she found a nice place in it and give it back to me to smell some more. Well, I guess I smelled it enough that time; I turned it around by the handle and smelled clean around it half a dozen times at a whirl. So then she put her nose in the middle and smelled right down into them

and then she picked out this one and picked out that one and smelled them separate. And all the time I had to keep saying how each one was nice. I got kind of sick standing and going on about them before the man; so when I got a chance I told her to come on around the corner and we would smell it by ourselves. So she said good-bye and done it.

Well, now she had flowers and so they had to be took out. I seen I would have to take her to the cemetery. She had a way about her that she could get what she wanted. She did n't even have to ask for it. So I says, "Come on!" and we went up to the end of the little railroad and got on.

We took a seat and sat close so that the conductor would think we was together. I did n't have to say nothing; he just took a look at her and gave me back a nickel out of my dime. When she seen how I took my money right out and paid, she said she guessed if she had me all the time I could take her 'most any place in the world and she could go all over. And she asked me if I could n't. So I says, "Yes." And then she said she was much obliged to me for paying. But I told her she need n't be.

"I did n't pay for you, anyway. You go free," I says.

"You gave him the money. I saw you," she says.

"But we go two for five. That don't count you," I says.

"But if you was n't along I could n't go two

for five," she says. And she tried to make out she was n't free at all.

"I would 'a' had to pay full fare just the same if you was n't along," I says. So then we got to arguing about it. She kept sticking to it that she was half; but after a while she had to give it up so as to watch things go by. Then we had a good time all the way; things go better when there is somebody to show them to. When we was to the cemetery the conductor stopped the train: and then we got off and let it go ahead again. It was a pretty fine day and some ways I was glad I come.

I had n't never been out there before, so I left it to her to find the right place. We found where you get in and then we went along through one of the best streets where it was all little stone fronts on each side; you could see it was one of the high-toned parts where the rich ones lived. I don't mean that; what I mean is that nobody is buried at all and you just go down the street past the little doors and know all the time that they are inside. There is some rich ones inside and some poor; and you can tell easy enough which is which. The rich ones are in the good neighborhoods where it is stone fronts and they own them and live there all the time. But the poor ones which rent are in long rows along the common streets, and every three years or so they are put out and somebody else moves in; a fellow would think maybe that would stop when people is dead but it don't. Not when it takes houses that costs money to build; then it keeps working just the same. But after

"'I don't see it,' she says"

they have been there a couple of years and it don't make any difference to them any more they throw them away with the rest of them in the basement.

We did n't get ahead very fast because we kept stopping to look at the different ones and talk about which was the best. There was n't much

doing there except it was awful quiet and you kept a-thinking. By the time we had picked out enough we had gone all sorts of ways, and then she come to a stop and tried to think out where she was. But she had got all mixed up. She could n't figure out where she was going. So I said we had better look for the boss and ask him; maybe he could look her ma up in the directory. But she did n't want to do that; she wanted to take the flowers right there and do it herself. And then I seen that she was going to cry because things had got the best of her.

"I would know it myself if I seen it. But I don't see it," she says.

"I thought you said she was in the wall," I says.

"She is," she says.

"Which wall?" I says.

"The one that is nearest to the cars," she says.

"Why did n't you say that at first?" I says.

"Because you did n't ask me," she says. "I thought I was going to come to it." So then I seen I had better take charge myself.

"Come on!" I says; and so we took a-hold of hands and she changed her mind about crying till she would see if I found it. I was glad she did n't get good and started. It was n't nothing to find; there was a whole row of them built together along that side. Anybody passing outside would think it was just a blank wall; but when you was inside you could see what it was. They would 'a' had to have a wall, anyways, so them being it made their rent cheaper, I guess.

We went along till we come to it. Her ma was up in the second-story row and it was too high for me to reach. And, besides, she wanted to do it herself. So I had to get up some way to do it; and there was n't nothing around there to stand on. And she stood and waited for me to think up what I was going to do about it. I thinks to myself, "What is the use of going to all this trouble if maybe she ain't in?" But right away I seen that as long as Louise was satisfied I better not say anything about it and maybe start her up.

She stood and waited a while and all I could think of was a ladder; and then all of a sudden she says, "Why don't you help me?"

Well, I was surprised; there I had been standing like a dummy and never thought of a boost. But I bet if she had been a fellow we would 'a' had it done already. I took the bouquet and fixed it with some shoe-string so it would hang, and then I h'isted her up; and between the two of us we was tall enough. It took her a long time and she was pretty heavy and did n't know how to stand; I bet if I had n't traveled with a circus I would n't 'a' knowed how to balance her. But after a while she hollered that she was done, and I let her down all right.

The bouquet hung upside down and did n't look right to me; I seen right away it was n't the right kind. It was a kind of a theater bouquet and was n't solemn enough. But she did n't seem to know the difference; so I did n't say nothing. And then she did n't want to go away right off. She wanted to stay around where she could look

at it once in a while and think how fine it was. She was pretty satisfied.

"Ain't you strong!" she says. "You could lift me up any place, could n't you?" She thought I was pretty good. But that was n't nothing. That is one of the easiest brother acts there is. I could 'a' walked around with her on my shoulders if she had knowed how to stand. But I would n't 'a' tried it with her; she would n't 'a' knowed how to fall. Then she would 'a' cried and blamed me. But one thing good about her is that she would 'a' let me. She seen I knew how.

"I won't try nothing with you," I says. "But I don't mind doing some myself." So then I done a few easy ones—standing on your head and throwing cart wheels and such. She thought that was awful wonderful. But that was n't nothing. So after I got limbered up and sweaty I guessed I would do some backs. It was nice and level around there and a good place to do things. I had got so I could do a back, when I did n't miss. Of course I missed some. But that ain't because I did n't know how; anybody has got to take time to practise. The only thing was that when I was doing a back I would sometimes come down in the middle of it. But that don't make no difference if you know how to fall. Falling is what you have got to learn first in a circus; you have got to know how to land right any ways you come down. Then you can try it again. Falling is one of the main things and I was good at that. First, I done a few flip-flaps; but that was n't nothing. I had

learned the rest of a flip-flap from Stubbs and most of a back. So then I whaled in and done half a dozen backs, and three of them turned out

"She was awful surprised"

good. She was awful surprised; she said she did n't know persons could jump over themselves like that. Well, I did do better than I expected; I seen I was feeling good, and that was n't nothing. I guessed I would do some leaps and roll-ups.

Them is when you run and jump right out into the air and come down on the back of your neck. Everybody thinks you are going to kill yourself but you don't. You would, though, if you did n't know how. All there is to it you kind of turn and come down just so and make a rocker out of your back and it rocks you right up on your feet again. You don't want to land all on the back of your neck at all but you do a roll-up. Well, I done a couple of medium-sized ones and they went good. She was awful scared and did n't want to look for fear something might happen. So then I sailed in and done a big one. But there was something in the grass; when I rolled up I got a stone-bruise on my backbone. So then I guessed I had better quit.

"Let us play mumblety-peg awhile," I says. So we done it.

After a while I got tired of that; I did n't really want to play it so very long in the first place. But she liked to be out there so well she did n't ever want to stop and go home at all; she kept on taking her turns over again and then I seen she had n't better fool with a knife so I took it. And after I shut it up and put it in my pocket she showed me how to make chains out of grass and how to wreathe wreaths till I got awful interested; she was the best I ever seen. And then we got to hunting all over for better stuff to make them out of.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SAM TAKES ON A LOAD OF RESPONSIBILITY

I DON'T know how it happened but I guess it must 'a' been after dinner-time when we first got out there; anyways, it must 'a' been pretty late. All I know about that is that I was kind of hungry when I first got out—but you can't go by that; a fellow is liable to be hungry most any time. Anyways, after a while when we was crawling along in the grass I looked up to see what the sun had gone behind and it was going down. The place where we put the bouquet was n't in sight. You see we had kept coming along and snooping around in the grass and just going somewhere else; that is why I did n't know where we was at. She said I had better take her home now; and then she just left it to me.

The main thing was to get out first. So I did n't lose no time but started straight ahead; I knew if I done that we would come out somewheres. We got kind of mixed up; and while

we was trying to get out it kept getting dusker and dusker. I was n't what you would really call scared—not as bad as some would be. But nobody likes to be fooling around after dark in a strange graveyard; even if there ain't ghosts.

After a while we come to the wall; but it was n't at a place where you could get out. So I seen the best way was to follow along it. So we kept a-going and I could see the rows of them all along ahead of us with the little doors shut on them like ovens. When you go along that place after dark there is dead people all pointing their feet at you through the brick wall. Of course you can't exactly see them; but you know that they are, anyways. Maybe I would n't 'a' minded it if they had n't 'a' had doors; that makes it different. Doors only shut. Maybe they was n't all full; they build them beforehand and know somebody will need them, the same as flats; so maybe some of them was empty. I kept thinking that; but you can't tell which is which so that don't do no good

She took a-hold of my hand and I told her not to be scared. But she said she was n't scared at all; she was n't afraid of anything because I was along. So I did n't say nothing. After that I did n't care much if I was scared; so I took out my knife and opened the blade; it is best to be good and ready and then you don't care what happens. We kept going right ahead and after awhile we come to the gate and got out. Then we hurried up and ran to catch the train.

When we got back to town it was night already

and Canal Street was lit up; but when we come to the river road it was plum' dark except sometimes a lamp post which did n't light up nothing but itself as if it was only a signal. The ships all had out their signal lights, too, along the edge of the river as far as you could see, and there was some green and red coming up the middle and twinkling in the water; I guess it was a sailing-boat. You could n't see nothing except to steer by, so all I had to do was to follow the signal-lights till we put in at the market; after that I would know the turns. It was a good thing I did, too, because she was so sleepy from riding that she did n't care where she lived. When we got into the road I took her by the hand so that she would n't get separated from hanging behind; she was too sleepy to say much. She come along pretty slow; or maybe it was that distance is farther when you ain't got anybody to talk to. And after she was used to me towing her along she could go 'most asleep and keep walking the same as if she was on wheels. I would 'a' paid her fare but there was n't no cars. Sometimes I would say something to her in the dark, but all she knew was that she was coming along. Sometimes she got to towing harder like we was in a current, but she kept a-coming; and after awhile I come to the dark market-place and crossed over. And when I was in the middle of it and got to thinking of her house I seen right away that maybe I ought n't to 'a' took her in the first place.

So I come to a stop.

When I stopped it kind of woke her up a little and she wanted to know what I stopped for.

"It ain't nothing," I says. "I just stopped to think." So then she stood and let herself be sleepy again. I guessed it would be better for me not to go clear to the house. I would stop a piece away and let her go on ahead. And I would stand and watch till she was in.

"Oh, Louise!" I says.

"Huh?" she says.

"Here we are. We are here by the old bell now."

"I know it," she says.

"S'pos'n' they say something to you about not coming home?"

"I know it," she says.

"Wake up, now. I want to tell you something," I says. So then she let go of my hand to rub her eye.

"What is it?" she says.

"S'pos'n' they say something to you about not coming home? What you want to do is to tell them that you had to go out with a fellow that is going to get a boarder."

"What boarder?" she says.

"The boarder I am going to bring. I was going to tell you, but I forgot to think about it. Pay attention now so you can have your story made up."

"You are only making believe," she says.

"No, I ain't," I says. "He is a real boarder."

Well, when I said boarder she woke right up; she come to as if it had got daylight all of a sudden.

"Can you get him for sure?" she says.

"Sure," I says. "I know a fellow that is a boarder; and he will come." And right away she wanted to know about him; I did n't think she could come so wide awake. So then I went on and told her how the fellow was a friend of mine and how he had been looking for a place out this way and had told me to get him one, and whatever I could think up.

When she seen it was so she started right in talking and tending to business; she was awful glad and excited to think she had got a boarder for them. She started to praise the place right up. And when she found I was going to come, too, she could n't hardly believe it. She told me all that the newspaper said about the place, too; she knew it by heart. So I had to tell her it did n't make any difference, because we was satisfied with the place and now she had better go on home. And then she wanted me to come along.

"What is the use?" I says. "I would only have to walk that far back. You go on ahead and I will stand and watch that nobody hurts you."

So she started away and I stood still to let her get a good distance ahead. But when I was just going to follow and come a little nearer to the house she turned right around and run back to me.

"What are you scared of?" I says.

"Whenever you and him are coming," she says, "ring the bell." And she pointed up to show she meant the bell on the pole.

"What for?" I says.

"So I can have time. When I hear it I can run

and put a match to the grate and get it blowed up and burning by the time you are here; because we don't keep it burning between times. You must always do that and then I can get his things out and have them ready for him whatever way he is used to."

"He ain't used to nothing. What things do you mean?" I says. "He don't bother much with things."

So she starts in and explains. The old tailor always done that; it was a kind of a far-off door-bell. It was Louise got it up, so he would always be suited. Then she could have the grate blowed up and his slippers sitting beside each other and the little table drawed up with his tobacco and things on it. He was such a slow walker on accounts of his feet that she had a pretty long notice; and so he always rung the alarm of himself.

"All right; I see how it is. Go on home now."

So she done it.

But she had n't got no farther this time when she turned around and come running back again.

"What is it now?" I says.

"And I forgot to tell you," she says. "We have a tub in the court which the cistern leaks into; the alligator can come and board there. He will be good and comfortable. I know what alligators likes and can take care of them."

"All right," I says.

"Be sure and get the man to come," she says. "It is a quiet and retired locality in the most interesting part of the city with all home accommodations. Be sure and come."

I seen right off she was reciting out of the newspaper. So I told her I 'd remember it.

"That is all right," I says. "It is just what he is looking for. So go on home now and don't come back no more."

That time she done it. I kept watch till I seen the door open and the light bust out on her; then I turned and scooted.

CHAPTER XXXIX

CLANCY GETS ALL BASES COVERED

WHEN I got home Clancy was in bed with the light turned down and snoring. When I woke up he was gone to work. So I went and got breakfast, which I knew the best ten-cent place, and then I hunted him up on the other smokestack where he was painting. When I got to where Rags was watching on the sidewalk and inquired my way up to the roof he had already h'isted himself; and he was away up to the top of it on accounts of him just commencing the job. And when he heard what it was that I was hollering up the stack to him he h'isted himself clean down to the roof again to hear it private.

Clancy said I done good. He said he was n't really expecting that I would find them any of the time; I could see he was pretty surprised at first. And then he let out that all he thought was that

I might as well put in my time that way and there was a chance I might; but he was expecting to go at it himself when he got his next job done.

He was awful interested; and after I told it to him quick I told it to him a little longer. Well, after he knew the main part he took a chew and leaned against the stack with his legs crossed and started to ask me questions about all the little things—'specially Louise. And pretty soon I began to notice something; so I up and told him he need n't get smart about it. You see at first he was serious and sensible; but afterwards he was only pretending he was. He was awful deceitful some ways. He was the kind that could pretend he was n't smiling and keep right on asking you things; and you could n't tell when he was starting to do that until it began to come out of his eyes. But I seen it all right. He kept on asking more about how I took care of her and done the flip-flaps and things, and I told him if he was going to get smart about it I would throw up the whole business. I did n't tell him no more. Then he had to smile and that give him away; and when he seen that he sat down in his tackle and started to h'ist himself up again. And I went. But just as I was going down through the hole in the roof he stopped h'isting and held himself with one hand and hollered down to me.

"That is all right, kid," he says. "You done good." And he said for me to meet him at dinnertime, which he knew I would have to do, anyways, because I did n't have no money. He always tried

to smooth things over like that; but I did n't say nothing. He could n't do it with me.

I went on down and sat on the sidewalk with Rags and he was awful glad to see me; dogs is different from people. When Clancy come down for dinner he did n't try to get smart any more, so I did n't say nothing. Anyways, I did n't have any money. We went to the market restaurant and took our different stalls; I was glad they was private. And after I had ate dinner I thinks to myself, "What is the use letting on; he has n't got no more sense." So I let it pass.

"'Kid with me in N. O.'"

"Come on," he says, and he led the way up the street and into a telegraph office. He took a piece of telegraph paper and spit on his pencil and wrote a telegraph right off:

—"Kid with me in N. O. People found. If anybody asks tell."

Then he signed it and addressed it to the captain of the Speed; he had to ask me the name of the town again. Then he shoved it in to the man and paid and we started back.

"Tell who?" I says.

"Valdes," he says. "It 's up to us to find him next, ain't it?"

"Of course," I says.

"Well, that covers that end of it," he says.

"Maybe he won't think it worth while to be looking for me," I says. "Maybe he has come back to St. Louis and went to see me and found I was n't there no more."

"Like as not," he says. "But there 's a chance he 'll go to the boat again, and it 's up to us to tend to it." Then he hurried back to the compress and up the stack.

That night when we was going to our room after supper he stopped and bought two sheets of paper with blue lines on it and an envelope; and then he sat down and wrote off a letter to explain the telegram. Afterwards he let me read it while he was ruling off the pencil lines on the envelope; it did n't say nothing much except that I was down there with him and that if a man inquired for me it was really him that was wanted and he would be at the above address which he put down at the bottom. Then when he got it off he sat down to take a rest. After that we would move. But he would get our mail at the same place.

"That don't suit me," I says. "We will have to do something more than that."

"Did n't he say he was going to get down this way?" he says.

"Yes," I says. "And maybe he has been here. When I told him you was going to see me in

New Orleans last winter, and that you was down here before, he said that he was going to get down this way himself. And that is all."

"Well," he says, "the next thing for you to do is to hang around the depot considerable."

He talked like I was working for him. And that was all.

"Ain't you going to do nothing?" I says.

"I will kind of keep my eye open," he says.

"By rights I am all done," I says.

"How so?" he says.

"I was to get two hundred and fifty dollars for finding you. And I done it. And you was to get the same for finding them. And I done it. That makes five hundred."

"That is the job you took," he says.

"Yes," I says.

"Well, the hardest part of some jobs comes afterwards."

"What is that?" I says.

"Collect," he says.

"We have got to find him. Them people needs him bad," I says.

"Yes. And they ain't no good to us without him," he says.

All he seemed to think was that I should sit by that train platform all the time without any more sense than a cat watching a rat hole. I told him so. He up and says that was it exactly. I had it just right, he said.

"The thing for you to do," he says, "is to go to that old wooden depot every day and watch the platform. You know him when you see him."

"I did n't know *her* by seeing her," I says. "And you would have. And then you made out I was the best one to find her."

"That was an entirely separate instance," he says. "We have got to catch him on the fly. Don't you see the difference?"

I kind of seen a difference so far as it went. But it did n't suit me.

"That is all right, but it don't suit me at all," I says. "There ought to be something different to do about a thing like this."

"Look a' here," he says; and he picked up the pencil and took the other piece of paper like he was going to prove it to me. "Look a' here," he says; "there is one thing we know, and that is that he intended to come here this winter."

"Yes," I says.

"Another thing we know—he has n't found them yet."

"Yes," I says.

"And there is just three ways to it. Either he has come and gone or he is here now or he is coming."

I said "Yes" to that too.

"Well, if he has come and gone he certainly won't find them anywhere else; so you can bet he will look for you at the boat to take another chance on me. Then he will get the letter with our right address and come. That is one way to settle it."

"Yes," I says.

"If he ain't here yet the only thing he can do is come; and if he is here now the only thing he

can do is go. So if you watch the platform you will be likely to get him coming or going. Do you understand that? And if you miss out maybe I can get him where he is stopping."

"Are you going to help?" I says.

"Did n't I say I would keep my eye open? So there 's you watching the depot, and there 's me keeping track of the hotel registers and the boat lists—and there 's the letter we have sent off. We have got all our bases covered; and we 'll catch him on the fly."

Well, I liked it better after he said it like that. He was one of them kind that just wants to go ahead and do things; I guess that is why he could n't get along with the boss. Somebody had to make him think them out.

"All right," I says. So he said that was all there was to it; it was just a job.

He slung the brussels kit on his shoulder and left it to me to bring the rest, which was only his good suit and his other shirt in their valise; I did n't have nothing. After we turned off of Canal he struck out along the river road so lively that I could hardly keep up—'specially with the valise bumping against my leg; so I threw it up on my shoulder and done like him and that went better; but after he got good and started he kept putting on steam and I had to keep telling him to hold himself back. He said it always made him go faster to have a load, which I said he was like old Speed, some ways; anyhow, he went at it like it was a job of walking he had took. That was because it was work, I guess; he did n't do that way when

he was just out walking. I kept up all right; but I was glad when we got to the old cobblestoned place. Then I dropped the valise and told him to stop.

"Hold up," I says. "I have got to ring the bell. And afterwards you must slow up."

"What is this?—playing steamboat?" he says.

"No," I says. "This here is sensible. Them is the arrangements I made."

"What arrangements?" he says.

"When they hear the bell they will know we are coming. And they will get things ready."

"Did you rent the whole neighborhood?" he says; and he stopped and looked at all the houses around.

He wanted to get up an argument about it, but I jumped up and got the end of the rope at the first grab. I could n't really ring it because when I come down with my feet on the ground the rope and me was so short that the bell stood upside down and could n't be rung. So I just let go of the rope and it turned a plum' summerset and gave a couple of rings itself.

"Now it is all right," I says. "That is to give them time. And whenever I give you the bell when we are passing here you must slow up; if you don't you will spoil the whole business."

"All right, Captain," he says. And then he done it.

We had n't gone on no more than ten steps when I seen the door go open up the street and then Louise come out on the step all excited and called out "Here they come!—Oh, here they come!" and right away she run in again.

"Now don't forget," he says to me, "to keep your mouth shut."

"I will," I says.

"And if anything happens that there needs to be any lying done, I will tend to it myself."

"All right," I says.

"But there won't need to be," he says. "They don't know anything about this business. So all you have to do is to forget about it."

"But they will maybe get to asking me questions. How did I get down here—how did I come to be with you—how did I come to find this place—how every old thing?"

"Tell them the TRUTH," he says. "Only drop the other business clean out of it. Then they will see you are telling the truth. Truth is facts. And when you are lying always stick to facts. Some people try to make up facts; but that takes brains. And it ain't necessary."

"All right," I says.

"And don't get it into your head," he says—and he stopped to tell it to me—"Don't get it into your head that the little girl don't count."

When we had talked that far we was to the stone step already; and the door was shut. I would 'a' thought they would be at it and waiting for us; because they heard the bell and knew we was coming. But we had to knock; then they waited a little while to be polite and come and answered it. And while I was standing there thinking about lies, I seen that was one, too. There is all kinds of them.

CHAPTER XL

AN EVENING AT HOME

WHEN they had waited and give themselves time to come Mrs. Valdes opened the door and wanted to know if we was the people; and we said we was. Well, she did n't remember Clancy at first; she did n't know it was him that stopped with her a few days a couple of years ago. But she knew him right away when he told her about it and she was pleased to see him. Clancy said to me afterwards that he would n't even 'a' told her that if it was n't that she might remember him later on—which she would catch him in a lie of not saying anything. They work all kinds of ways. Clancy was smart that way; he could head off a lie further than most people could see it coming.

When we got into the parlor Louise was on her knees before the fire trying to pump it up the chimney with the bellows; it had taken longer

than she thought and maybe was n't going to burn at all; it flickered and fooled and would n't go up the chimney and she would stop to catch her breath and put her hair behind her ear again and look to see if it was making up its mind. I got awful interested, so I took the job away from her and worked the bellows myself; and Clancy was took up-stairs to look at our room. I worked it hard and kept a-blowing with my face down to the fire till I was all sweaty and did n't need no fire; but I made it come. Then I was so warm I turned the bellows the other way and fanned myself some —a bellows is awful handy, because you can blow yourself hot or cold with it—and while I was doing it Clancy come back from up-stairs and give me a look that I put them down. That was making out he did n't tell me; it was another kind of a lie. So I done it.

There was a young lady sitting by the lamp reading a book; I guess she was the one that ate up all the roast beef. Clancy took a chair and sat down by the corner of the fire and pointed out another one to me. So I took it and sat down beside him. The wooden angel was there; it was a pretty good one. It was in the corner with its hands crossed on its breast and saying its prayers all the time. We all kept on being quiet; nobody said nothing.

The young lady was reading a book which she turned the leaves pretty often. I got a look at the paper cover when she kind of lifted it up; it was about "The Three Muskeeters." And the fellow

that wrote it did n't know how to spell them. Well, them and gnats is both hard to spell; but if I did n't know how I would n't write no book about them. She kept turning the leaves and when she had let enough time go so that it would look as if it was by accident she got up and went out. I was getting so I seen into lots of things from going with Clancy. So then Clancy kind of limbered up and took the chance to throw his chew in the fire; it sizzled and sputtered and then got quiet again. He had forgot and brought it in with him and now I bet he was glad it was gone; I seen him shift it to his other cheek away from the young lady. And just when it was all through and was quiet again, Mrs. Valdes come to the door and asked if we would n't have something to eat; but Clancy said "No," it was so late we had both had supper. But I guess she thought he was only saying it, because she said we must have some coffee, anyways, and she went away to get it. Then Louise come to the door. And she stood there and smiled right at us.

"Look a' here, Louise," I says, "where is my alligator a-going. Show me that there place."

"All right. Come along with me," she says. "And you too. You can come along too," she says, meaning Clancy.

But he would n't go.

"Aw, come along," I says. "See him swim. That ain't going to hurt nothing. It is in the back yard."

"Do you think," he says, "that I am going out there through their kitchen?"

"Oh, you don't have to," she says. "I 'll take you out through the passage. I will show you the way." So when me and her both went against him he give in.

She took us out of the front door again and then through a high narrow board gate at the corner of the house and along through the dark between the walls of the houses till we come to an inside yard. It was paved with brick and had high brick walls all around; the yard was two or three stories deep. All that made that yard out-of-doors was that you could look up. There was the blank side of the other brick buildings around and joining with the brick floor; you was all inside of brick and only that passage to get out except you went through the door of their kitchen. You could look up out of the yard and see the stars on top. And when you did it awhile you would think maybe you come along and fell into it.

I seen what would be a good way to build a house. All you would need to do is to get a place and then get four other people to build their brick houses around the place. Then all that would be left for you to do would be to put a roof on. It would n't hardly cost nothing.

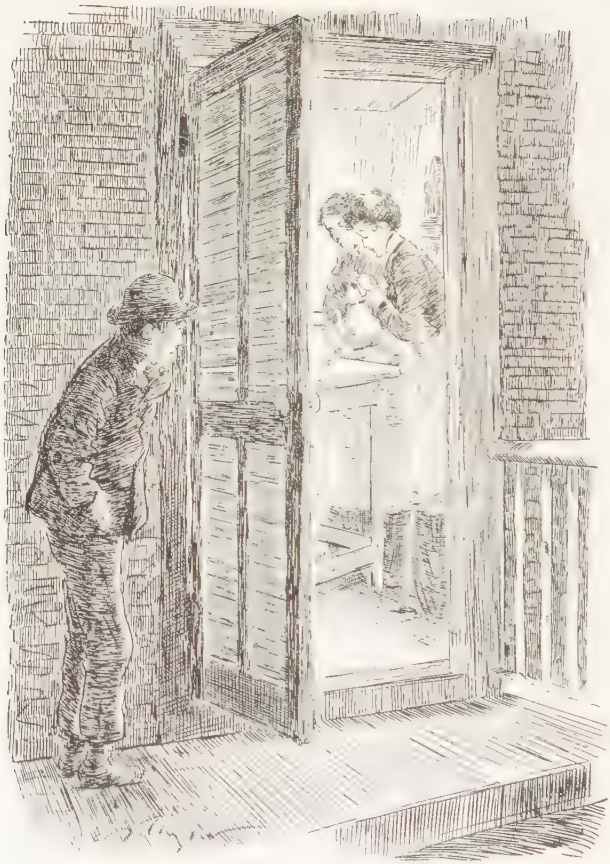
There was n't nothing inside the yard but the cistern, which was away up like a railroad water-tank and the tub down under. The kitchen door was a little open and there come out a streak of light and a smell of coffee. It made me awful hungry.

I untied George from my button and let Louise

take him, and then she put a wash-board slanting into the tub of water; that was his beach. He could come out of the water to take a rest and the wrinkles of the board would n't let him slip; or he could lay comfortable and take a sleep where they kept the soap. Then he could go in and take a swim again. I seen she knew all about alligators just like she claimed; she done it good. She made him do things so that Clancy would see how it worked; and he had to stay and let her show him. So I stood where I could kind of see what they was doing in the kitchen. They never knew we was out there.

Mrs. Valdes was doing something with a funny coffee-pot; it had a tin cistern which she put into the top and then put the coffee into that. And then I seen Manuelo, too. She come with a kettle of water and stood pouring it slow. She had on a black dress with white cuffs and a white collar that shined in the lamplight; and them made her look dark complexioned. But she was dark complexioned already. It is funny how some of them dark-complexioned people can be so good looking, anyway. She was. She had dark hair and dark long eyelashes too—I seen that because she was looking down at the water pouring. I guess she kind of took after Valdes but looked like her mother.

When she had enough poured out she went away to put the kettle somewheres. And then her mother and her both come and stood by the coffee-pot, waiting for the water to leak through the little



"She was looking down at the water pouring"

cistern and be coffee. And while they was doing it they started to talk.

"I saw that piece of black lace again yesterday," Mrs. Valdes says.

Manuelo did n't say nothing. She just stood and looked at the coffee. And then Mrs. Valdes started it up again.

"If he seems to like it here well enough to stay I am going to get it for you," she says.

"Oh, I don't want it, mother; I can get along without it," Manuelo says.

"And it will make SUCH a beautiful little hat—the way you have of fixing things. And you know, dear, old lace is all the nicer. No one will know but it was some that we had left."

"No, you must n't get it," Manuelo says. "I really don't need it. I can fix over the things on the old hat."

"And if Jean gets those tickets to the opera it will be just the thing. Black lace looks so well on you that you really ought to have a great deal of it."

"You must n't think of such a thing. I can get along without it, mother. The old feather will do again," Manuelo says.

"And there is over a yard—for only ninety cents."

"Over a yard!" Manuelo says. "A person could do a great deal with that."

Then she went on about how a person could do like this with it and how a person could do like that with it; she put her hands up to her head and

made herself a hat all out of nothing. I could tell she would know just how; each one of her fingers acted out just how it would be—I could most see it myself. But afterwards she said she was only thinking how anybody could make it; but she did n't want it. Well, I would 'a' thought she would be awful glad to get it. But she up and said she would n't have it.

"And I am sure it won't be gone for a few days. Not many come there that will see what it is," her mother says. "But you must n't get your mind set on it. Because we are not sure yet that he will stay."

So then Manuelo laughed and said what was the use of talking to somebody that had their own mind set. And then she patted her mother on the back like she was whipping her for it. But right afterwards she give her a kiss over her eye to make it all right and then dropped the whole business. The way she acted you would think she was her ma's own mother. Girls is that way. Then Mrs. Valdes started to say more—but just then Clancy got tired fooling with Louise and the alligator and told me to come on.

So we went back and set still in the parlor again. Rags was out on the doorstep sitting and waiting. I told Clancy about it and he said he would wait a long time, because I must n't let him in. He could stay out on the doorstep nights and watch. I bet if Louise had been there she would 'a' got him a place, too. But she was out in the kitchen.

So while she was gone and nobody was listening

I told Clancy what I heard them saying about him. He just listened to it and did n't say nothing; I thought he did n't care. Then Mrs. Valdes come and showed us out to the table. He did n't really want nothing; but he ate considerable and began to get interested and say what good cooking it was; he said the coffee was just the way he liked it and the cold biscuits was just grand. I could see she was pleased; and right away I seen through his talk. But she did n't know how it come. When Clancy made up his mind and got started he could lie so that you would n't know the difference. We had pickles, too.

It was kind of chilly on accounts of it being almost the middle of winter and Mrs. Valdes said it would n't be nice and pleasant for us to sit up in our room. So we went and staid quiet in the parlor again.

Clancy took out his paper and started in to read the sporting part. He did n't even talk. Nobody was around. I went over to take a look at the other side of the wooden angel; but Clancy told me to leave things alone. Then he went on reading again about how the base-ball teams would maybe be next summer. Well, I set down again and kept it up awhile. There was n't nothing to do but just think up something. But that don't take long. Right away you think of it and then what is the use if you can't go and do it or tell nobody. Some people can just sit and think thoughts; but I can't. I always think of something to do. I went to the window and looked out. Rags was sitting

right there waiting and hoping. So I went and sat down again. But dogs can beat anybody out on that. They are used to it. I wished something would happen. I kept making up things to think about—but none of them was no good; I got tired of myself. But I had to sit and do it anyways.

The next thing I knew Clancy give me a poke and told me to wake up and come to bed. I wished he would let me alone; but he would n't. So I got up and made myself walk up-stairs. It was another of them old-time beds with its roof on four posts and it was all piled up with bedclothes and ticks and things. It was so high that Clancy had to give me a h'ist by one foot like I was getting onto a horse; and then it was good-bye to thinking.

CHAPTER XLI

JIM

NEXT morning after our breakfast — nobody had theirs yet—Clancy took me right along with him and we both went to work, me at the depot and him on a stack. We done the same every day and after that we was never around the house much except to board, which we only took breakfast and supper. But after a few days Clancy decided to take dinner from Mrs. Valdes, too, and carry it along with us instead of buying it down town; that way he could give her more money. We kept on going there to sleep; and it was n't over a week till Clancy got all through with his stacks. He said I was better off than he was because I had a job and he did n't. And he could n't get one, neither—not unless he went out of town. And that would n't do. But he said he had to get one whether he could or not; he had to send money to his mother and he owed her six dollars already.

So he could n't go loafing around. But I could n't see how he was going to get one when there was n't any.

Right after that was when I got put away from the depot for keeps. The policeman told me three times that runners was against the law in that town—he thought I was looking for boarders. I told him I was n't no runner at all but only a watcher; but he could n't understand the difference.

And I did n't want to go and tell him and get him mixed up into it. So he give me the last warning to keep away from there. So that was the end of that. We was both out of our jobs and everything was going wrong.

We went away from the house every morning after breakfast just the same as if we was going to work; we did n't say nothing. I would rather 'a' staid home and watched the horse with Louise, and maybe carved a little on it,—but Clancy said I better just come right along with him, so I done it. And then there was n't nothing for me to do but hang around the levee with the dinner in my hand and wait till it was time for Clancy to come back. That was a nuisance;. I always felt like eating some but did n't dast to let myself start in. That would n't be fair. So I would just sit down next to a ship and watch things—nobody cares around them. And Clancy would go to work regular to find a job.

But that did n't last long. One day he come back and motioned to me with his finger and says

"Come on." So I got up and followed him along down river. I thought maybe he had got a job; but he had n't. He had looked for a job long enough; and now he had made one up—he had found a condemned horse.

Jim had been condemned over three years now; but he would do for a horse yet, even if he was kind of stiff in his bones. Mrs. O'Toole would 'a' sold him to somebody long ago, I guess—only she could n't make up her mind. She had got so used to his company that when her boy Jerry would threaten to sell him, she could n't bear to part with him no more than if he was a dog—but he was awful big to have around. Jerry would 'a' sold him. But when it come right down to it she would up and say that, anyways, Jim did n't eat no more than a goat and she hoped no son of hers would begrudge it to him. And then she would cry till Jerry would think he had done something cruel; and he would give it up. They both wished they did n't have him, some ways; but she would n't let him go. But some ways you could n't blame her.

You see, when a fire horse gets his hoofs all knocked to pieces and is used up all over they sell him off for a second-hand horse; and if you are a friend of the administration you can buy him for a few dollars. Well, Jerry, which was driving Jim on Truck Eight then, was friends of the administration. And he was friends of Jim too; and that is why he hated to see him took off by anybody at all just because he was cheap. So he got

Jim for a little less and took him home himself—he was a bargain, anyways.

This Jerry was the same fellow I had heard that policeman telling about when I was hiding under the tarpaulin; it was him that was such a good swimmer. Clancy had got acquainted with him; he met him one day in the river. And when they came to land he told Clancy all about the butter business and how he had failed and had to go back on the department again.

It was just after he took Jim home that he got the chance to buy the butter route. He did n't want to get into business, but his mother was always worrying for fear he would get dumped off of Number Eight driving so hard, and so he took the chance to get out. Then Jim come right in handy; he could poke around with a butter wagon, even if he was used up. But after Jerry found out how he was n't cut out for the butter business he had to go back on the department; and since then Jim had been standing around in the yard. And Jerry's ma, which was awful Irish, would n't let no horse that had been on Truck Eight ever go off and come to bad luck; and maybe be abused and get to be an old iron-and-rags horse or something. That is how it was.

Well, as I was saying, Clancy motioned to me and says "Come on"; and while we were going along he told me about the horse that was out of a job. And he thought he could get him one. When we got to the place Jim had his head hung over the fence till the next person—he was friends

of everybody—would come along and give him something. He was n't as bad as you would expect. It was mostly his hoofs that had got knocked to pieces in the hard runs; and they had had a good long time to mend up. But he was awful bony.

Clancy had already seen Jerry about it; but it all depended on whether we could make it all right with his mother. And after she had looked Clancy over she was satisfied with him. But we had to stand and listen to everything about Jerry again—and how he was n't born dishonest enough to think of putting the two kinds of butter in one jar and shoving the test tube into the good part of it—and how Jim had been the best horse on Truck Eight and was as harmless as a child—and what a brave boy Jerry was and what danger he put himself in with his reckless driving. She went on and on. But Clancy listened to every word; I guess that was why she liked him. So he come to a bargain that he was to have Jim just for exercising him if he would feed him oats. And it was settled. It was better than letting him stuff hisself with hay and just be a relics.

"Git ap!" says Clancy. And then me and him and Jim and Rags went away up river to another old common part of town. And pretty soon I found what the rest of it was.

That morning—which was pretty fine for winter time—Clancy was walking along up the river with his mind open for a job; and he come to a vacant lot where there was an ash-pile with all sorts of

cast-off things—tin cans and sardine boxes and an old hat—I guess every old ash-pile has got a hat. And standing along with them was an old hack.

"Clancy listened to every word"

He looked it over and he found it was all there and the wheels went round; and that was what put him in mind of Jim.

Well, we looked it over again; and it was about like Jim, that did n't have no more the matter with him one place than another; they matched themselves all over. So Clancy went and paid the five dollars for it and hitched up. Clancy got up on the box and done the driving, and me and Rags took a ride inside; and the axles of it kept singing like a canary all the way. But we got back to Jerry's mother's all right; and then Clancy pitched in and went all over it with the black paint he had left—everything come in handy. He only had to mix in some japan that was warranted to dry in an hour. And while it was drying he repaired the hack all over with a tack hammer and some oil-cloth and ten cents' worth of gimp. And then Jerry's mother made him a present of some of the old leavings of butter, which he put on the axles for grease; and it took the squeak all out of them and made the wheels spin round. He put some window glass in the lamp that was broken and shined up the handles and the hubs. When that brass stuff began to shine against the black the whole thing looked good all of a sudden; and Jerry's mother said it was "the piether of a hack." And then the only trouble was it was so fine that Jim did n't look good enough for it no more.

"I doubt ye 'll do well," Jerry's mother says. "Ye are a fine smooth-lookin' bye; an' a lady wud pick ye out av a WHOLE LINE av hacks. An' wid ye standin' befure it they 'll see nothin' but th' brass hubs shinin'—an' ye 'll have thim in it

befure they think to look at th' outside av it at all. I doubt ye 'll do well. An' ye 'll not be like Jerry, whin he wint into business: because ye can't put on an exthra dab av THAT, ivery time a lady shmiles at ye."

Clancy had to sit around for it to dry; so he went and put on his good suit. He was a great hand to go right at things and get them done. When he got back the quick drier had got all hard. So as soon as it was dark enough he went to the depot; and that night he caught a lady.

Well, the policeman could n't drive me away from the depot no more; I belonged with the hack. After Clancy had tried it on a few people and found it worked, he took out a license; so now we had a rights at the depot. And every once in a while he would take somebody in; 'specially after dark.

What Jerry's mother said turned out to be true. He caught mostly ladies; which they take right off to the best man to look out for them. They don't look so much at the rig they are getting for their money like a man would, 'specially after dark. Well, when he found that his luck was with ladies and that they took to him more than the ones that looked like hack-drivers, he got so that he was expecting them. When a lady would come you would think he had been sent there to watch and wait for her. And, sure enough, there would be something about him that when she caught his eye she would make her mind up and he would bow her right in. After he found he was a success

things come natural to him; he did n't even have to try. You would think one lady told another, but they did n't. There was something about it. Clancy said that if he knew he would take so good in business he would 'a' gone into it long ago.

The hack would n't stay good looking very long, but with him doing something to it every day and polishing the brass it was all right; the only trouble was with Jim. He was so big and bony he queered the whole business. And he could n't take a tack hammer and make him over. "You can't repair Jim with thirty cents' worth of stuff," I says. And then he went and done it.

Out to the race-tracks one day he got a kind of a horse mackintosh with a hood on it. And when it was the least excuse of a rainy day or a little chilly, he would fix up Jim like he was valuable—you could n't see anything but the four hoofs of him and his eyes looking out of the goggle-holes of it. His hoofs were all right and all horses has good eyes; you would n't 'a' knowed but what we had a thoroughbred inside. And Jim could wear it most always; it is a good thing that winter down there is the rainy season, it was just Clancy's luck. Jerry's mother said that if the mackintosh only had spangles on it, Jim would 'a' been good enough to march in the Mardi-grass perade—nobody would 'a' knowed.

One day we got in a high-toned gambler that wanted to go in a hurry over to Number Six; and he did n't take time to be particular; he did n't know till he was inside and got to look-

ing things over. When he got out he looked things over more; and while he was lifting the corner of Jim's cover Clancy stood and smiled and did n't say nothing. It was such a fraud that the gambler seemed to like it. "Here 's your dollar," he says. "God loves a cheerful bluffer." After that other sports would patronize him—for luck or fun, I don't know which—but things got better and better.

But there was one thing about the hack that was a secret. One of the doors was out of kilter and would n't work; it was the right-hand one. It only had one hinge left and was held in mostly by the handle; so Clancy had to nail it shut for fear someone would try to open it and it would fall out. That was all right for anybody that was going to get out on the left-hand side of the street; but if they lived on the right-hand side Clancy had to work it like a down-river boat that must make a turn and land with her nose up stream. But he knew how to work it. If anybody was going to get out on the right-hand side—which he could tell beforehand by the number they was going to—he would make a mistake and drive past it. No matter how much they hollered up through the speaking-hole he would happen to not hear them and drive past it; and when he seen his mistake he would turn around and come back. On a left-hand landing it was an up-river hack; and on a right-hand landing it was a down-river hack; and he always worked things so that it just seemed natural. He always kept the door a secret; no one ever knowed it.

It was all right when he could just stand with his left side to the curbstone; but it was no good for the theater, where you could n't work it to suit yourself. And one time what does he do but get a job to take a lady home from the theater where he had to get in line and come up with his

"'God loves a cheerful bluffer'"

right side to the block like the rest of them; and he took it. I thought he was crazy. But he done it. We stood in line with the rest of them. And when the fellow hollered out our number to come and get the lady, Clancy drove right up to the block as if he was going to stop before the lady with the side that was nailed shut—and I thinks to myself, "Here is where we get put out of business." But when we was coming up to it Jim got awful unmanageable and Clancy jerked on the lines and made a great fuss as if we had an awful fiery horse inside of the mackintosh; and that way he made Jim go too far. And then he backed up so that he wedged against the curb and could n't back to the block. Jim could 'a' done it but the lines was worked so that he could n't tell what Clancy wanted; and he got rattled. So then Clancy leans over and smiles to the lady and says:

"If you will just step to the carriage block next door I can get you in more comfortable, where they are not in such a hurry."

Then he circled round in the street and got her at the next place on a down-river landing; and he got down and handed her in so polite that she thought he was very thoughtful and done her a great favor. You would n't 'a' knowed the difference. He had to do them things. But he did n't mind it.

I liked the hack business. Rags and me could go all over and see things without walking—but we always had to be back at the depot at train times. And every day I had to stay with Clancy

so that if Valdes came in I would know it was him. Clancy was fixed now so that it was easy to find boarders; so he got Mrs. Valdes three of them. One of them staid three days and one staid a week; but the other turned out to be a steady.

Jean got the tickets to take Manuelo to the Opera. When Clancy heard about it he told Manuelo he would give them a pass to go in the hack; it would n't cost them nothing. She was awful surprised and said he was too kind; but he said that did n't hurt nothing, and besides that she might as well be the real thing; and I could see she was pleased. So that day he shined the hack up particular.

When we drove up to the house that night, her and Jean was standing on the step waiting. She had on the new hat—and a string of little beads that hung down from her neck and looped at her waist. She looked mighty pretty in the hat; she made it herself. It was n't nothing but that piece of black lace, but she had turned it into a hat some way that made it look like it cost a lot. Clancy made me and Rags get off the box; he said we could n't go along. And when they was inside he straightened up and threw his shoulders back and held his whip just right—I did n't know he could put on so much style. You would n't ever 'a' knowed he was acquainted with them. You would 'a' thought he was hired.

Things kept coming along about the same—nothing much doing. And just about that time Clancy had a falling-out with the old tailor. Clancy never

did like him, anyways. He said he was no good except to sit around and get paid for owning something. And some ways Clancy was like Rags. If he did n't like a person he just did n't like him. He would n't like them even if they fed him meat. I have seen him take it out of their hand and growl at them all the time he was doing it. And the more Clancy seen the old tailor the more he took objections to him.

One evening when we come home to supper, Clancy looked up and seen him sitting on the gallery—same as usual.

"Look at that old house-barnacle sitting up there on the porch again," he says. "You 'd think he had a free ticket in the gallery to see the world go round."

"But he is retired," I says.

"Retired! What right has HE got to be retired? After sitting all his life with his legs folded. Them women ain't retired."

"But he owns the place," I says.

"That only makes it WORSE. What's wrong is WRONG." And after that I dassent say no more.

It got to working inside of him more and more about them women and the tailor. And after a while he could n't see nothing around the place but the tailor. He brought his old blue nose to dinner—and between times he sat like a fat hop-toad up on the gallery.

When people ain't born to like each other, it is going to find some kind of a way to get out; 'spe-

cially with Clancy. It come out through the weather. The tailor said it was n't good weather; he could n't sit up on the gallery. And Clancy started in and took the weather's side. He wanted to know what right HE had to be finding fault with the weather. And he said that some people would like to have the world made over for them. Clancy was looking for trouble. And at every answer he bid higher for it. Then the tailor said something real grumpy, which was all Clancy wanted; and right then he started in and give the stingy old tailor a definition of hisself from stem to stern. Only he did n't dast to say anything that would bring the women into it. That might get them into trouble.

After that the old tailor was n't going to have him around there no more; but that did n't do him any good because Clancy knew it first. He bid Mrs. Valdes good-bye, and said we would recommend her to anybody that came along—and then we picked up our things and left. The tailor did n't get the satisfaction of saying it.

"It don't make any difference for us to leave, anyway," Clancy said. "All that is important is for us to know where they are. And we know that mighty well. Anyways, it was worth it."

So we went back and roomed with the old lady on Canal Street again; Clancy said she was a square old lady and needed the money too. And, besides, he did n't feel so bad about leaving Mrs. Valdes since he had got her a steady which would be a substitute for himself.

One morning, when we had been back at the Canal Street place awhile, we was going down the hall and we met a lot of young ladies—enough to make a Sunday-school class. There was all kinds of young ladies.

"What is this?" says Clancy. "I think I can guess. I seen them come in last night—with a man at the head of them."

Right then one of the doors opened and they all filed in. And while it was open me and Clancy stood and listened.

—"Now, ladies, we will prepare for the first rehearsal—and I hope you will all appreciate all the advantages I am giving you and no—"; and then the door went shut.

But I knew the rest. It was the Professor. He had given up the show-scow and was getting up a troupe.

When he had it started me and Clancy went to see them. They were called Prof. Lagorio's Creole Blondes. But, pshaw! they was n't no such thing.

The Professor would always have to get up something that was n't. Then it would be more of an attraction. The play which he acted was that he was getting up a troupe and teaching them to play on the stage. And that was all he was a-doing, anyways. And he just hustled around the stage and said the things in the play the same as if he was himself; he did n't even take the trouble to act. And blame if he was n't a big hit. Here he was pretending he was acting when he was n't; he was the biggest fraud I ever seen.

Things run along the same with me and Clancy till Christmas come; but that did n't amount to much. I would 'a' liked to go out and see Louise and find out if it was true that she did n't hang up her stocking then or get no presents. But the old tailor was mad at me, too, because I belonged with Clancy. And, besides, Clancy told me to stick right with him and not be running out to see Louise; he said I would get to telling her all I knew. So I had to stay away. But I says to myself, "I am going out New Year's anyways; because New Year's is Christmas down there."

New Year's come; but Clancy made me stay with him and watch the trains come in. We did n't do as much as you would expect that day; but we got a couple of jobs in the evening. And then we had to stay out pretty late, because Clancy could always catch more people after dark when they could n't see plain, and when they would have time to get drunk and not care—'specially New Year's eve.

When it was commencing to get late enough to be some good, the old rooming-house lady come rushing down the street with a handkerchief in her hand that she had been using to cry with—but now she was using it to signal to Clancy while she was coming. And before she had got to us she told him to, oh, please, come! somebody was running away. Clancy piled down off the hack, and Rags after him. I got down, too, but Clancy motioned me back and told me to stay with Jim and watch for business. "If you get a drunk, take him

in and keep him''—and then he run. And the two of them went together into the depot.

And I could sit there and see nothing. There was n't nothing for me but to just watch other people going past and having a good time. I wished I could see SOME excitement. I asked a man going by what time it was. ''Eleven o'clock,'' he says. That was one hour before twelve—which I was waiting for. I thinks to myself, ''The New Year's noise will start in after a while, and I would like to see them shut me off from that.'' I wished it would start up or something. So I just sat looking at the depot platform and waiting for it.

CHAPTER XLII

ALL HANDS ON DECK

WHILE I was thinking to myself, I began to feel somebody looking at me. Sometimes your mind is like a hack that has a little window in the back; and you can see out of both ends. That is how you know that somebody is looking at you. As quick as I knew it I looked down and seen a man with a valise in his hand; he was standing and looking up at me as if he was just making up his mind. But it did n't take me long to make up my mind—it was Valdes.

"Gee Christmas! it is you," I says. "This is me."

"So I was thinking," he says.

"And I never seen you get off the train," I says.

"I did n't get off—I was just going to get on it. I was going up to St. Louis to look for you."

"And your name not on the hotel registers—nor nothing!"

"I just arrived; I got in on the boat from Brazil. Did you ever find that Clancy?"

"I have got him right here. And we have got your folks—"

"Where?"

"Come right along," I says. And we did n't take time to say no more.

When we got into the depot it was all excitement—and a policeman was standing to one side a-smiling and not mixing up in the trouble at all. Clancy he had the Creole Blondes and the Professor backed up into a corner, and holding them there; his coat was on the floor and Rags was walking back and forth a-growling—they was afraid to move. The Professor was trying to smooth things over and the old lady was standing to one side with her eyes on Clancy a-hoping and waiting to see how it would come out.

"No more talk goes," says Clancy. "Dig up!"

And then he shut his fists and squared off. You could see his arm through a torn place in his shirt—which he did n't have on any undershirt—and it looked like his big muscle was looking at the Professor out of a window. The Professor tried to say some more about how it was a little oversight of his and how he would have dispatched back at the next station when he did n't have such a pressure of business—but Clancy was done listening.

"'Dig up!'"

"Dig up!" he says. Right then I seen Clancy's muscle jerk up on his arm—I could 'most see it winking at me out of the hole—and right away the Professor seen it was the third and last call; he

went down into his pocket in a jiffy. And he took out a big roll of bills.

I ran up and give Clancy a jerk by the back of his vest. But he would n't pay no attention to nobody. He just give me a quick look and brushed me away from behind him with his left hand like I was a fly and must n't bother.

And I could n't get him to hear nor see nothing till he had taken over every dollar of it, one bill at a time, and seen it was just right—thirty-two dollars and a half. When he had it in a bunch he went and give it to the old lady and picked up his coat. Just when he was starting to brush it off, I give him another pull and he turned quick and says, "Why did n't you stay on the hack? What is a-aching you?"

"This is him," I says, pointing to Valdes. "And this is him," I says, pointing to Clancy.

They shook hands and smiled like they was glad to meet each other. And they sized each other up.

"The boy tells me that you are acquainted with Mrs. Valdes. What city is she in?"

"The city of New Orleans. I 'll take you right out there—Come on"—and Clancy led the way right out to the hack. "You must excuse me," he says, putting his coat on while he went, "but I had to collect a bill for a lady."

Valdes' eyes was standing open and looking at every inch of Clancy as if he could n't believe things so all-of-a-sudden. So he did n't even have time to get to talking.

"Get right in there—it is my hack," Clancy

says, throwing the valise right in with him. And Valdes had no more than got his hand out of the road when Clancy slammed the door shut and the rest of us got up on the seat.

We went down Canal Street to the end of it, and then turned down the river road. It was pretty dark along there—it reminded me of the night I took Louise home—and the hack bumped and rolled in ways that you could n't see beforehand; so Clancy just flicked the whip on the mackintosh a couple of times to wake Jim up; and then he let him jog along easy. I seen he was taking time to get over his mad; and, besides, I guess he was in a hurry to get our five hundred. But after a little, when we was going along steady, he took a chew and give me a nudge.

"Well, kid; what do you think of it?" he says.

"It is pretty good, ain't it, Clancy," I says.

"I should say yes," he says. And he spit out into the night.

While we was going along I told him how Valdes had been down to South America all the time we was waiting for him; but he did n't say much; he just tended to Jim and watched that he did n't make a misstep. He was making pretty sure of the five hundred.

When we got to the house, Clancy jumped off and turned the handle of the hack to let Valdes out; and then he went and rapped loud.

The old tailor come to the door. And when he seen it was Clancy he slammed it right shut again. And locked it. And bolted it. Clancy was sur-

prised. He took his whip and welted on the door good and plenty. And then he took his fist and hammered on it louder. I guess Valdes was surprised too; he just stood and waited—he seen he could leave it to Clancy. And he made such a noise that a woman come to the door of the next house. She wanted to see what was the matter.

"Excuse me, lady," says Clancy; "but I am just starting in to make a little trouble. We want to get Mrs. Valdes."

"Mrs. Valdes is not there any more."

"Where is she?"

"Why, she has given up. She went away with her daughter and son-in-law. He is going to put up the horse."

"When?" says Clancy.

"About an hour ago."

"What boat?"

"The Colon."

It took Clancy back just for a minute (he never expected that). And while we was saying nothing the woman shut the door.

"What time is it by your watch—exactly?" says Clancy.

"Nineteen minutes to twelve," says Valdes.

And then Clancy started in to talk. He put together what that woman said and made a story of it and told it while I would 'a' been standing there thinking it out.

"Your daughter was going with a fellow—He was carving a horse—Wooden St. Martin for a church—He has it done—Got five hundred dollars for it—Married your daughter—They are taking a

trip to put it up on the church—Your wife has gone along—To South America—Colon's sailing is at midnight, twelve o'clock."

"Gone for ME—at last," says Valdes. "Eighteen minutes to twelve—Can you get me there?"

"Sure thing—duck!" says Clancy. And we all ducked to the hack.

The door slammed on Valdes as quick as a trap and Clancy grabbed the mackintosh off of Jim and threw it away like he was stripping him for a fight. We did n't bother about Rags—we climbed up on the box and Clancy brought down the whip.

It was the first time we had ever struck Jim on his bare hide before. He jerked his head up surprised; and then he stuck his nose out and kept it there. Jim knew right away something was up.

Jim was n't no gaited horse—that was one reason he was n't worth much. You see he was n't just a race-horse and he was n't just a draft-horse; he did n't know any gait but just run and pull at the same time, and he done it by jumps. But, as Clancy said, he was "all horse," which he had to run natural; and his business was to take hold of something pretty heavy and put it there pretty quick. And that is why that when we stirred him up he would want to lope in the shafts and we would always have to keep him from it; he was a big bony galloper that when you turned him loose in a hack it would make you mad. But now it was different. Clancy stirred him up and turned him loose his old way. And he could go better than you would 'a' thought.

After we got around the end of the old market,

Clancy gave him another cut and we struck down the long road again along the line of ships. Clancy's hands was working back and forth, giving him his head and holding him up at the same time; and he spoke to Jim and encouraged him along. You see he wanted Jim to understand his turning loose was O. K. and we did n't have no objections.

It was all quiet along there, so we did n't have to turn out and dodge anybody—which was a good thing. There was n't much sound except a rattly spoke and Jim's hoofs pounding on the dirt—kerplunk-kerplunk, kerplunk-kerplunk, kerplunk-kerplunk. The road was twice as bumpy as when we come; it was out of one hollow and into another, a-dipping to this side and to that, and the hack taking a jump at every gallop. I kept watching the ships sailing by, and hoped a wheel would n't bust.

We had n't passed more than twenty or thirty ships when I began to worry. Jim was sounding different. He was going kerplink, kerplink.

"Clancy," I hollers; "his loose shoe is going worse!"

"Let it," he says. "He 'll cast it."

After that I could hear one hoof keeping time all by itself - kerplink-kerplink, kerplink-kerplink, kerplink-kerplink. I just braced my feet and hoped that the hack and Jim would hold out.

But we had n't gone much farther when I plum' give up. The New Year's whistles were starting to blow. And we was n't half way there.

I heard a cotton-compress starting up away off. Then the noise run over to another part of town and others joined in; and right away it started up in different parts like noise was catching. And in a minute the whole of New Orleans had it bad—and the ships worst of all. When them ships started you could n't hear the city at all; there was a noise all together like the ocean had just woke up and started to holler. There was ships' bells ringing, and tugs a-screaming, and river boats going it in a chorus, and siren whistles yowling, and ocean steamers with their voices coming up from down deep—I never knew there WAS such a noise.

Besides the general all-over noise, the boats that were passing right next to us would sound loudest in our ears, and Jim would take us at every jump into a different sound of it; we went past an ocean tramp that made the air tremble while we passed through, and then a siren that was going it like a steam cat, and then—just as we was passing a lamp-post—a ship's bell started clanging all of a sudden. I seen Jim perk up his ears and lay them back and take a bigger jump than ever; and then he dug right into it. I thought he was going as fast as he could. But he was n't—not till now. He went into a regular hook-and-ladder gallop; and then I grabbed for the seat. I guess he thought it was a General Alarm. Every time he jumped I thought he was going clean out of the shafts. The old springs of the hack would go clean down and touch bottom in a hollow, and then they would

open and give the hack a jump like off a spring-board clean over the next vacant place. I had to hold on tight. But Clancy just had his feet braced; and his hands was going back and forth like he was shoving Jim harder.

A city thinks it can make a noise. With some factories scattered around! But what can it do against a few miles of ships that are drawn right up in line together like an army of steam-boilers. When they start to holler against a city you would n't know the city was there. A cotton-compress don't sound like meow. And it was getting worse and worse. It was like a devil had come in from the ocean and made all the ships into a steam-organ five miles long; and you could hear it like running fingers all up and down the water-front with a ship's boiler behind every note, and sometimes coming down on the whole shooting-match and working the chimes along. Once in a while when we struck a little vacant place in the noise I could hear Jim going kerplunk, kerplunk—I guess he had cast the shoe. What Valdes was thinking I don't know, except he was just holding himself inside of the hack.

After a while it seemed to me I heard a voice trying to get out of the speaking-hole. I took a good grip and put my ear down and listened.

"Did you say anything?" I hollered.

"A thousand—Make it a THOUSAND—We 've only got—" But just then we went through the noise of a ship that was drowning out everything around there.

When I seen a little chance I hollered into Clancy's ear. "A thousand—he says he 'll make it a THOUSAND."

He just turned his head a second—which I seen he heard—and then he tended right to the driving again. And next we passed some ships' bells that were striking like it was a hundred o'clock.

Jim must 'a' thought the whole city of New Orleans was burning down. And we was going to put it out. Anyways, he went like it. He could n't 'a' done better if the whole cotton-wharf was burning again.

I did n't care no more. It was like I was riding along on top of the noise and nothing would dast to happen. Sometimes you feel that way. Only I was kind of glad that we had that straightaway run—no corner to turn and no one to turn out for. If there had been a corner on the way Jim would 'a' made one of them fire-engine turns—and slewed the hack clean off its axles. You could n't 'a' stopped him.

The hack had stood so many jumps that I guessed it would stand more of the same. Sometimes it felt as if half our wheel tracks was vacant spaces: and I hoped it would be good for the finish.

And it was. Clancy leaned back on the lines when we come to the Colon; but he could n't bring Jim in all of a sudden. He got him to almost sitting down and then he had to see-saw on the lines to make him stand.

While he was doing that, Valdes jumped out of the hack, seen he was at the Colon, and made a

bee-line for her. Her wheel was churning a'ready and two sailors was laying hold of the ropes. He got on her at the last instant; and by the time me and Clancy got there she had dropped fifteen or twenty feet out. She might as well have been to South America.

Valdes was n't in sight. He was n't leaning over the side to say anything or bid us good-bye. He had gone right to the inside of the ship on his own business. And she kept going out; and then began to drop farther and farther down the river.

While we was standing there a-looking, Rags came in about three minutes behind time. He sat down beside us, panting, and let his tongue hang away out for the fresh air to blow on it. Old Jim's sides was going in and out like bellows—I bet he was catching breath from five years back—and his nostrils was working. The noise was beginning to peter out and leave it pretty still. The moon had come out and was looking at its face in the water. I watched her going farther and farther away and kept a-thinking. There was lots to think about; 'specially the thousand. And besides that I bet there was lots of surprise and gladness and things inside of the ship; and that would be nice to think about—if it was n't for the thousand which was going along with them. Clancy just folded his arms and looked at it awhile. Then he turned and looked at the rest of the outfit. And then he says to me: "Well, would n't that take the lead out of your pencil."

P. S.—Elkins has looked it over. He says the

story was good before I started; but it ain't what he expected. But that is all there is to Valdes' story without I would go on and let out a lot of my own business; and what is the sense in that?

What Louise says about it is right. She says that if she was me she would keep my business to herself. So would I. And keep my money till someday we need it. But I guess it ain't no more than right for me to put down that Valdes did n't go and cheat us out of that thousand; he was n't that

kind of a sport. When they got back he looked us up and paid us. Then me and Clancy went and had a big supper. He took beefsteak smothered in onions. I took the same and ice-cream. The rest of us is all getting along as good as you could expect; and Louise is going to school.

The last I heard of Griswold he was mating up on the Red River. Who would 'a' thought he was such a good swimmer?

THE END